HORATIO STEBBINS

His Ministry and Personality

By CHARLES A. MURDOCK

THE subject of this memoir was born on a Massachusetts farm a hundred years ago — August 8, 1821. After graduating from the Harvard Divinity School, he held a short pastorate in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and a longer one in Portland, Maine. Then in 1864, when Starr King died, Mr. Stebbins was called to the Church in San Francisco, at that time the only Unitarian Church on the Pacific coast.

In the thirty-five years of his work in California he not only did great things for his own church and the general cause of religion, but he was influential in all kinds of good works. He had much to do with the development of the little College of California into the great State University, of which he was a regent for many years. He was a trustee of Leland Stanford University and of the California School for Mechanic Arts.

The writer of this memoir is a prominent business man who was intimately associated with Dr. Stebbins in San Francisco, and he presents an interesting picture of a strong personality.

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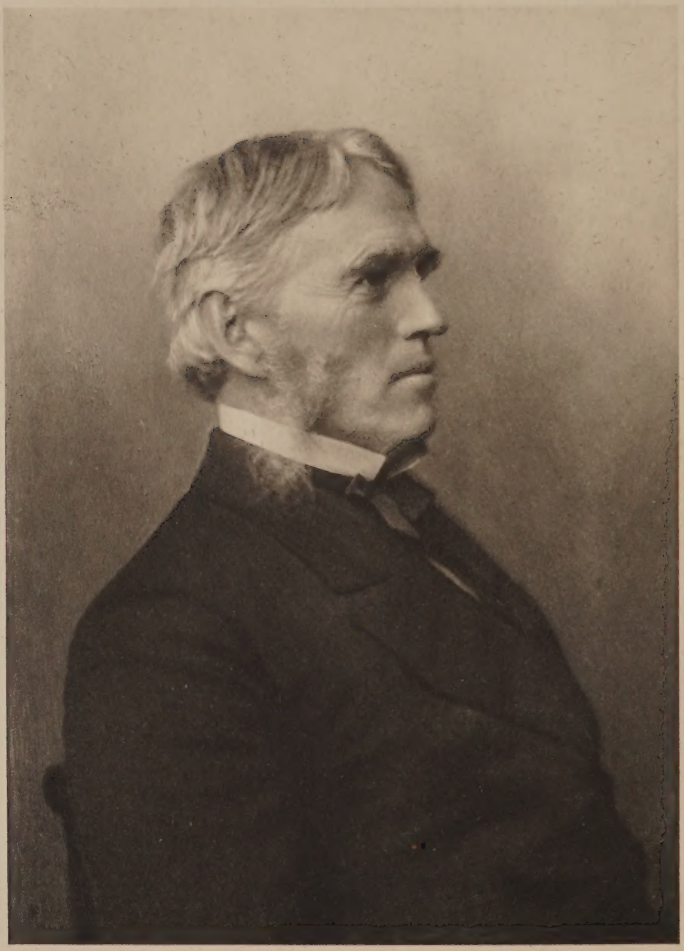

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BY

CHARLES A. MURDOCK

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DEDICATED

TO THE FAMILY HE DEARLY LOVED

AND THE PEOPLE HE NOBLY SERVED

"There are souls that seem to dwell
Above the earth, so rich a spell
Floats round their steps where'er they move."

PREFACE

THERE are lives that should be better known and every memory of them jealously cherished. A debt of gratitude and a clear responsibility rest upon those whose privilege it has been to enjoy an exceptional influence.

Horatio Stebbins, in his day and generation, was a man of rare power and lofty spirit. He was a great personality, with uncommon gifts of mind and heart. His mountainous faith was a marked characteristic. He united strength and tenderness in a degree that made him a leader of men. His absolute integrity, his kindliness, his serenity, his patient faithfulness, his fortitude, his magnanimity, his humor, made him the embodiment of the best religious life. For fifty years he preached a rational and reverent religion, with great power. He loved God and his fellow-men. He lived happily, he served gladly, he died courageously.

For the more than thirty-five years of his ministry in San Francisco I knew him well and enjoyed his indulgent friendship, a blessing that demands every possible return. I feel my inability to set forth adequately his message and personality, but I am moved by a profound sense of obligation to do what I may to make him known as he was, to recall to those who

loved him some of his characteristic sayings with incidents of his fruitful life, and especially to extend his influence to this generation, by emphasis on his benign and beautiful spirit.

C. A. M.

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HORATIO STEBBINS

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

THE Stebbins families of the Connecticut Valley find a common ancestor in Rowland Stebbins, born in Bocking, Essex County, England, on the fifth day of November, 1592. In the baptismal record in the register of St. Mary's Church there, the name is spelled Stebing. Rowland came to America in 1634 with his wife, Sarah Whiting, and two sons. After living in Roxbury, Massachusetts, for four or five years, he moved his family to Springfield, the site of which his friend Pynchon had bought from the Indians some years before. With his son John he later removed to Northampton, while the elder son, Thomas, remained permanently in Springfield. From him Horatio Stebbins was descended.

In 1685 the "outward commons" of Springfield, mountainous land on both sides of the Connecticut River, were awarded to settlers, and three sons of Thomas secured subdivisions. Samuel Stebbins, great-grandson of Thomas and great-grandfather of Horatio, settled on one of these subdivisions in 1741. The tract was nine miles from Springfield and a part of the future

town of South Wilbraham, now known as Hampden. In those days families were generous in size, and Samuel had ten brothers and sisters. His own family was limited to eight children, but his son and his grandson in the direct line had the customary eleven. Calvin Stebbins, one of his grandsons, married Amelia Adams, a young woman of character and charm. Horatio was their third son. Roderick, five years older, became a successful physician. The second son, Randolph, was Horatio's senior by two years. Two other brothers died in infancy. The mother died when Horatio was six years of age. By his father's second marriage there were three children, one of whom, the Reverend Calvin Stebbins, D.D., is still living.

In the history of Wilbraham the family name appears frequently. In 1741 the application for a parish meeting was signed by Samuel Stebbins, and at the meeting he was made an assessor. Aaron, Caleb, and Phineas held minor offices. The location of the meeting-house was a stirring issue. It was six years before Wigwam Hill triumphed, and it was twelve years before this site was accepted, the church built, and all the gallery seats were installed.

The community was intensely loyal to the cause of the colonies. In 1774 a pledge against purchasing or consuming goods imported from Great Britain was signed by one hundred and twenty-five determined men, ten of whom bore the name of Stebbins. In 1775 the call from Lexington was promptly answered by a

company of volunteers. Another company rallied at Bennington to the relief of Gates. At least ten of the Stebbins family served in the Continental army. In church matters the family was interested, but independent. In 1805, when a petition for a Methodist Episcopal Church was presented to the town, thirteen of the proponents signed the name of Stebbins, and several of the same name signed a protest against it.

From such an ancestry and in such a community Horatio Stebbins was born on August 8, 1821, of the eighth generation of his American family. His father was a well-to-do farmer, a man of good mind but limited education. He was just and upright, respected by his neighbors. In his family relations he united gentleness and wise severity. He made his son a companion. Dr. Stebbins said of him: "He often bore me upon his shoulder across the running river, or led me by the hand through meadows where birds sang and lilies bloomed."

The death of Horatio's mother in his early boyhood was an irreparable loss. She was a woman of fine temper, good sense, and great sensibility. She is said to have had an unusual gift for sententious expression, which Dr. Stebbins also possessed, perhaps inherited from her. He had merely a childhood recollection of her — a beautiful but indistinct picture of a loving presence as she spoke to him in tender blessing on her dying bed.

Dr. Stebbins had an intense affection for his grand-

mother. In a remarkable sermon on "The End of Being," he says: "There is one other whose being was a beatific vision to my childhood heart, above all the accidents of earthly existence, in whom duty was a cheerful song, and care a happy delight; from whose heart love shone like the lily in Abou Ben Adhem's dream. She was my grandmother. What beautiful conduct! Her feet touched the earth as lightly as an angel's; in her face was the strange mystery of pain and joy, and a piety in which all fear was changed to reverence. To a child's heart, beauty shone around, as glory on the shepherds of Judea. Thanks be to God that such visions and wonderings and imaginations may be in the heart of a child. They are the light beyond our earthly horizons, tingeing our morning heights."

The family home was the scene of much kindly hospitality. The father was interested in religion, politics, and the intercourse of educated men, and he enjoyed entertaining visiting ministers and strangers generally. Polemics had not much interest for the young boy, but he liked to hear the ministers discuss matters with his father, who, to the son at least, seemed to hold his own. Many of these men were marked figures, who impressed him strongly. He remembered especially Minister Warner, who wore breeches, knee-buckles, and a queue of braided hair; also Elder Brewster, who had a very small salary, but always seemed to have money to lend; and Wilbur Fiske, the Methodist,

who founded a college at Middletown, Connecticut. Mr. Stebbins was a reverent man, but he never took much interest in the revivals that recurred regularly.

The home was well supplied with books, and the boy learned to read by reading to his father. For three months in the winter he attended the district school. He early showed ability for work on the farm, and could cut grain in the field, drive a team on the road, or fell a tree in the woods. His youthful sports were simple: a little hunting and fishing, a bee-hunt in the summer, spelling-school in the autumn, nuts and apples around the open fire in the winter. From all that is told of his boyhood life and from his later development, it is plain that one of his happy inheritances was vigorous strength. Physically and mentally he was sound and well. He could do all kinds of things to help his father, and he grew up expecting to do them. He was surrounded by an atmosphere of work, conducive to health of body and mind. He was generally a happy boy, although he had a vein of sensitiveness, and occasionally suffered from some imagined grievance. No doubt he missed his mother unconsciously, but he was a normal boy, thoughtful and serious-minded, who enjoyed good reading. He early showed a predilection for the best preachers, and was attracted to Channing and Dewey before he was twelve years old. He had a half-formed hope that some day he might be a minister, but definite purpose awaited development and the assurance of possibility.

The early unfolding of the boyish mind was recalled more than fifty years later, with a beautiful picture of his daily life. He opened his Easter sermon in 1887 with these words: "When I was a boy, thirteen years old, I sat at noonday beneath the shadow of an oak on my father's farm to eat my luncheon and allow the patient oxen to rest and refresh themselves from the plough. I had taken with me to the field a little book, the first printed sermons of Orville Dewey, that great preacher of a former generation, whose fine sensibility, tender pathos, and moral insight delighted with deep and reverent feeling the hearts of men. I had taken my luncheon, and the oxen were feeding on the fine English hay, that had a brightness and flavor like Hyson tea. I lay flat upon the ground and read: 'The world is filled with the voices of the dead. Though they are invisible, yet life is filled with their presence.' Go where we will, the dead are with us. We live, we converse, with those who once lived and conversed with us. Their well-remembered tone mingles with the whispering breezes, with the sound of the falling leaf, with the jubilee shout of the springtime. The earth is filled with their shadowy train."

These days of helpfulness on the farm left many pleasant memories. In a sermon on "Looking Backward" he says: "Jesus affirms that 'no man is fit for the Kingdom of God who holds the plough and looks backward.' Did you ever hold a plough? It is a much better business than you think. On a fine morning in

May, when the sun shines clear through genial air, the trees are putting forth their buds into tender leaves, and birds are singing in the branches, it is a pleasant thing to go into the field with a team of strong, handsome, gentle-eyed oxen, their heads high, their horns pure white tipped with shining brass, their faces so honest that you know they could never tell a lie. There is a picture, familiar to many of you, perhaps, of a ploughing team, with a man and boy. The boy is holding, and his father is walking by his side, directing him with a gesture of his hand. It is a simple picture of a simple scene, such as artists of great genius choose when they present the scenery of common life on the level canvas, and fascinate and surprise us with the greatness of the everyday sentiments of human nature. I have looked upon that picture many times, and I could imagine that I heard the father tell his son how to hold the plough: 'So, my lad; bear on the handles gently; cut the same breadth; keep the same depth, and turn the furrow flat; speak quietly to the team, and don't look behind you; the work is here.'"

Next to the family and the home comes the influence of community life and customs. It was almost a hundred years ago, and there was far less relaxation from Puritan severity than we find to-day. There was far greater simplicity, and a rigor we know little. Life was a serious business. To make a living, simple though it was, was not easy, and hard work was a necessary habit of existence. Happiness, if reached,

depended little on self-indulgence. Accumulations of wealth were infrequent, amusements few, and pleasure hardly expected. Frivolity was frowned upon as something that could not be afforded. Economy was a part of the atmosphere, and extended to the expression of affection. The church loomed large as a part of life, and, although its standards were narrow and its demands rigid, it nurtured strong characters. Waste did not weaken and luxury did not corrupt. The difficulty of getting anything spurred effort, and vigorous effort generated the strength required to accomplish purpose.

Such environment and educational advantages might not now be considered favorable, but we are prone to underestimate the value of what is hard and difficult. Conditions may be favorable in the degree that they compel effort and arouse determination.

When Horatio Stebbins was about fourteen, he really needed better educational privileges than the district school afforded, and he went to Springfield to attend the high school, working nights and mornings to earn his board. He was not satisfied with the results. The studies were dull, and the teachers did not inspire him. After about a year and a half, he felt an ambition to earn money, and went home to hire out on a neighboring farm. He felt that he was doing well to earn twelve dollars and a half a month; and he saved a good part of his wages, for his wants were simple. After a year or more he and his brother entered into an ar-

rangement with their father by which they worked the family farm on shares, and for two years they were moderately successful. During this period of wage-work and farming he kept at his studies, and finally applied for the place of schoolmaster in a near-by district. He passed the examination, and began to teach at a salary of fifteen dollars a month, boarding around after the manner of the time. He was thereafter engaged for the four months' winter term, and taught for several years.

My native town, Leominster, was about forty-five miles to the northeast, but his reputation extended even there. One winter he was engaged to teach for the central district. At the advent of a new master, a test commonly arose for actual control. On the first day of the term the big boys were apt to be unruly and in this instance they were provokingly defiant; but the question was summarily solved. The new master, Horatio Stebbins, said little, but he quietly opened the outside door, grasped the ringleader, lifted him high in air, and threw him into a snowbank. His control was not further questioned. The fact that the boy was the son of a prominent deacon gave the schoolmaster no concern.

Taught by teaching, ambition grew until Horatio finally formed the settled purpose to take a college course. One day, as he and his father worked together in the field, he broached the subject. His father was not unsympathetic, but gave him no encouragement. He was unable to give all his sons a college education

and felt that he must treat them alike. Horatio remained firm in his purpose, and, realizing the difficulties to be overcome, he determined to accomplish the undertaking by his own efforts.

A friend of his father's conducted an academy at Ithaca, New York, and thither he went, riding ten miles in the family buggy and walking a hundred miles to the Hudson River, in order to husband his small savings. He could not carry his belongings, and sent them by the stage. When he paid the charge in Ithaca, he found that it had cost him only fifty cents less than if he had taken a railway ticket and brought his baggage — a painful lesson in false economy. He began a course of hard study, spending one dollar and twenty-five cents a week for food and lodging, and nearly breaking down in health as a consequence. In six months he was obliged to go out and teach. Trying to make a short cut he added to his teaching the study of medicine, reading evenings and riding with the doctor during vacations. He soon became dissatisfied and discouraged, and returned to his home, feeling that he had wasted two years. For a short time he managed to pursue elementary studies at Northampton, and spent a few months pleasantly and profitably with his cousin, Rufus Phineas Stebbins, at Leominster. Finally, having overcome many obstacles and made what he considered many blunders, he planted his feet more firmly on a recognized ladder of learning.

Before the Revolution one John Phillips founded a preparatory school at Exeter, New Hampshire, and here young Stebbins made his way. His course was prolonged by necessary interruptions for school-teaching, when funds gave out, but on the whole he made good time. In 1845, he was invited to give the Fourth of July address at a celebration at Epping, New Hampshire. This address has especial interest as the earliest example of his public speaking that has been preserved. In many respects it was remarkable. He spoke with serious purpose of the principles and ideals of liberty. Thoughtful and prophetic, it suggested in passages and tone the Gettysburg Address. He said in part: "We honor our fathers most in honoring the great principles which they revered; we are their most worthy children when we cherish in our own bosoms the virtues they reverenced, when we acknowledge the power of the great truths they uttered, and for which they went out for voluntary martyrdom. It is a poor tribute to their memory that we laud their deeds, if the true heroism of those deeds does not dwell in us. Poor, indeed, is it that we speak here the praise of liberty unless we are able to cherish that same spirit of self-sacrifice which moved those heroes of the past. As we stand this day at their graves, let silence be the eloquence we utter. The spirit of the mighty past is here; the heroic dead are here. They speak; let us be still!"

He then traced the rise of the star of human im-

provement, finding the key that unlocks the destiny of the human race to be heroic devotion to truth. "Freedom is dangerous, and not to be enjoyed in passive ease and security. It puts man's higher powers to the test. Governments have usurped power, and human life and liberty have been baubles with which kings have played; but it has been now established that there are principles more sacred than the divine right of kings. We stand among the nations asserting the highest principles of government under heaven, recognizing the rights of man more fully, a thousand years in advance of European civilization. We as a nation are but a handful of men in comparison to the myriad hosts of the earth who wait for the deliverance which we have reached, and if they ever reach it, it must be from the genius of our institutions."

He concluded with faith in the general diffusion of the great doctrine of universal brotherhood, and in the spirit of inquiry and freedom of thought.

This address is singularly impressive, coming from a young man in a preparatory school, and especially as indicating how early in life were established convictions that he firmly maintained to the end. It is also interesting to recall that thirty-one years later he was selected to speak for the great city in which he had cast his lot, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which also coincided with the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of San Francisco itself.

The following year he graduated from Phillips Exeter, honored as class orator and also delivering a notable address on "The Dignity of Learning," before the Golden Branch Society. In this he declared that the highest objects of education are the influences it exerts on character. One striking sentence was: "Man is not educated if his moral and religious nature be not developed; he is only mangled, and if he is great, he is great in his deformity."

On June 21, 1883, Dr. Stebbins enjoyed attending the Centennial of Phillips Exeter Academy. It must have been a satisfaction to him to be selected to deliver the oration.

He left Exeter with little money in his purse. When he reached Boston, it was reduced to three dollars, and he probably had recourse to one of his periodical drafts on his school-teaching bank. He had made friends who believed in him and wanted to help him, and he allowed them to make some small advances during his college and divinity school days; but he was mainly self-supporting, and had no false pride as to the character of the work that offered. The story of his potato patch was long told at Harvard. He received from Dr. Noyes, of the Harvard Divinity School, permission to cultivate a vacant field on Oxford Street, near Kirkland Street, where a wing of the Agassiz Museum was afterwards built. It was a dry summer and a hard year for potatoes in Cambridge, but morning and night young Stebbins carried pailful

after pailful of water from the college pump to supply his need. Other potatoes failed to mature, prices were correspondingly high, and the student-farmer cleared one hundred dollars from his potato patch.

Horatio Stebbins received his degree at Harvard in 1848. His friend Horace Davis, ten years younger, graduated in 1849. It may be inferred that the nine years' priority represents about the time taken to overcome the handicap of having to earn his own way. How much it added to the fiber of his character cannot possibly be shown, but no one could know Dr. Stebbins without feeling that his strength and independence had been largely fostered by his circumstances.

There are evident advantages in postponing the study of theology until relative maturity. At the age of twenty-seven a man should have a ripened judgment and a firmer grasp on truth than is possible in boyhood. Such an experience as that of young Stebbins was doubtless a valuable preparatory course, but fortunately he was able to push on now without added delay. He was anxious to find his place in life and to do his work, but he was wise in not taking advantage of opportunities to cut short his training and accept a pulpit in advance of the completion of his preparatory studies. He resolutely stayed by the Harvard Divinity School, and regularly graduated in the class of 1851.

This was a momentous year in his life. The important question of location was first to be determined.

Evidently his promise was immediately recognized, and he was offered the choice of several desirable pulpits. One was in Boston and would have been taken by almost any graduate, but Horatio Stebbins had a way of thinking a thing out in all its bearings. He had, in the first place, a sincere purpose to render the best possible service. He felt that he was the best judge of his own qualifications and limitations, and that he was better fitted to a country pulpit than to one in a great city. He had known country people all his life, and could get at them and help them far better than the more sophisticated dwellers in the city. Therefore, after careful consideration, he accepted the call to Fitchburg. It was a good church in a manufacturing center about forty miles from Boston. He was ordained a minister and settled over the church on November 5, 1851. Before entering his ministry he married Mary Ann Fisher, of Northborough.

Miss Fisher was the daughter of Samuel Fisher and Mary Bowman, and the granddaughter of Joseph Bowman and Anna Valentine, representatives of families distinguished in the history of Massachusetts. One of her ancestors, the first of his name in this country, was Advocate-General of the Provinces of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, and is buried in the burying-ground of King's Chapel, Boston, of which church he was a warden. Mary was a beautiful girl, endowed with vivacity and a playful sense of humor, but not robust in health.

CHAPTER II

FITCHBURG AND PORTLAND

1851–1864

HORATIO STEBBINS was ordained in Fitchburg as a minister of the Unitarian Church and installed as colleague of the Reverend Calvin Lincoln. The Reverend Andrew P. Peabody, of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, preached the sermon, and the Reverend George R. Noyes, the Reverend Converse Francis, the Reverend John F. W. Ware, and others took part in the service. It was an auspicious beginning of a long ministerial career. His wife wrote a glowing account of it to his brother, Dr. Roderick Stebbins, then living at Friendship, New York:

"Horatio's ordination went off finely. The day was bright and clear — a beautiful autumn day. The services were peculiarly solemn and impressive, of the highest order. Everybody said so. The house was crowded. After the service the ministers and delegates, with their wives and all invited guests, went to the Fitchburg Hotel to dine. We stayed at the hotel until four o'clock, then came home to rest, in order to attend the levee which took place at the hotel in the evening. We went down about seven, and met nearly all the members of the parish. I never was at so large a party before. There were about four hundred there, and we

were introduced to nearly all and shook hands with them. About nine we went down to the dining-room to refreshments. We had music and songs. It was a grand affair. It showed the good feeling of the people. They have all been very cordial. Nothing could be more so. Do not think, my dear brother, that we are carried away with all this. It is not so. We feel that we are among our friends, and feel grateful for their kindness and cordiality."

Her husband added a postscript: "I find myself with a whole village on my shoulders. There is a great parish here, numbering two hundred families at least, and among them a good sprinkling of educated and clear-headed men. I have got something to do to keep up to their expectations. Mary is a great help to me by her affectionate discretion and quick sense of propriety without referring to rules. My dear brother, not a day passes in which you do not make a part of our conversation. We think of you and talk of you by ourselves, for our hearts delight to turn toward you, and to love you.

"Your dear brother, HORATIO STEBBINS."

His wife closed the letter with a second postscript, giving an interesting side of the new life: "He married a couple the day after the ordination, for which he received five dollars. That belongs to me, of course, and now, if anything is wanted, why, he thinks I can get it, as I have money enough. I hope he'll get another job soon."

Fitchburg adjoins Leominster, where I spent most of my boyhood. It was about five miles from church to church, and the two ministers frequently exchanged pulpits. I found the tall young minister a most attractive visitor. He was impressive even to a boy. His appearance and manner were different from those of any one else. His was a new pattern, and he said things in his own way. I was always interested in his texts, which were unworn by common usage. I was not equal to following him closely, and I knew nothing about originality or personality, but I now see why he seemed distinctive and pleasing. He used rather long words, I thought, and he preached to men rather than boys, but I liked him, for he was genuine and strong.

There was poor connection between the towns, long before the day of street cars, and when the ministers exchanged they usually walked. Naturally they met as they went home, and they often stopped to talk. Years afterwards Dr. Stebbins related an experience. Amos Smith, our Leominster minister, was a man of rare kindliness, very good but bland, piously emotional, and not forceful. He was fond of Stebbins and wanted to help him. One day they had an earnest talk. As they parted, he stretched himself up on his toes, grasped his towering brother by his collar, and exclaimed: "Stebbins, Stebbins, you must *try to be spiritual!*" "While all the time," Dr. Stebbins said, "I was trying to hold myself in and be moderate in

expressing my deep feeling." However, it is to be admitted that in earlier years his intellect seemed predominant. His clear, thorough thought was so evident that his feelings were less readily recognized, and the indwelling spirit was hidden as are the stars at midday. As he ripened he mellowed, and more and more he became the seer and the prophet — commandingly spiritual.

Dr. Stebbins was well liked by his Fitchburg parish, and declined a number of calls to leave them. One of these calls, in 1852, was from the church in San Francisco. It was a kind providence that left that particular church to be ministered to eight years later by Starr King, and also allowed Horatio Stebbins to grow and ripen for twelve years, gaining firm mastery of great principles that enabled him powerfully to supplement the brilliant leadership of King.

At the death of Dr. Stebbins the *Springfield Republican* related a characteristic incident of his Fitchburg ministry that throws light on how he captured his first followers. When he was pastor in Fitchburg, according to this narrative, he set out to interest a close-fisted farmer who had long been the terror of the clergymen of Fitchburg and the hard case of the town. Calling on this farmer one day, he found him at work in the hay-field, and drew him into conversation about farming, a subject with which his early experience had made him familiar.

"You like farmin'? Can ye mow?" said the farmer.

"Oh, yes, I used to mow a little when I was a boy," was the reply.

"I'd like to lay a swath with ye," said the farmer.

"All right," replied the doctor, as he stripped off his coat.

The farmer chuckled, for his prowess with the scythe was the pride of his life, and he dearly loved to test the endurance of rival mowers and exult in their downfall. He gave the doctor the choice of his scythes. The latter picked out a good one, and the two strode in silence to the part of the unmown field where the grass stood the tallest. The doctor struck in, followed by the farmer, and so strong and powerful were the clergyman's strokes that the farmer could hardly follow him.

"You are the only man I ever saw that could lead me at the end of the round," he said. "I guess I'll have to come to hear you preach next Sunday, by gosh," he remarked as he wiped the perspiration from his brow.

Early in 1854 Dr. Stebbins was invited by the people of the "Old First Parish" of Portland, Maine, to become the associate of that remarkable and beloved man, Ichabod Nichols, for whom he entertained great admiration and regard. In later life Dr. Stebbins wrote of him: "He was a man of genius, too little known but thought by those who knew him to be one of the unknown great men. His mind was essentially poetic and saw truth as by spiritual vision. He was present at Baltimore when Channing preached the great ser-

mon there — the most polished theologic weapon of that period. Dr. Nichols told me that before Channing preached, on the morning of the day, he read the sermon to him, Nichols, asking his opinion concerning the discourse. Dr. Nichols, in his modesty, said to me, 'I considered that a great honor.' I always thought that Ichabod Nichols was as great a man as Channing, though without Channing's consciousness and will."

Dr. Stebbins accepted the call, not that he was dissatisfied with Fitchburg, but from a desire to be associated with a man so eminent and to gain added opportunity for service.

At the installation on January 31, 1855, the sermon was by the Reverend George E. Ellis of Charlestown. Dr. Peabody, the Reverend Joseph H. Allen of Bangor, the Reverend Cyrus A. Bartol of Boston, and the Reverend Loammi G. Ware of Augusta, shared in the service, and the senior pastor, the Reverend Ichabod Nichols, made the prayer of installation. Perhaps no other church in the land had had an equal record of long ministries. The Reverend Thomas Smith served for seventy years from 1725; the Reverend Samuel Deane, forty-five years; and Dr. Nichols had served forty-six years when Dr. Stebbins became his associate. It cannot be doubted that, but for the imperative call to fill the gap when Starr King fell, nine years later, he would have spent the remainder of his life in the dearly loved Portland parish and equaled the term of his two predecessors.

Dr. Nichols died early in January, 1859. On the Sunday following, Dr. Stebbins preached from the text: "All saw his face, as it had been an Angel." A brief extract from the concluding paragraphs expresses his estimate and admiration: "His was the heroism of saintship, the heroism of thought, aspiration, and obedience: a mysterious, childlike man, a man whose best words were spoken upon the air and cannot be gathered, who could hardly read his own sermons after the ink was dry, so did his mind, continually renewed by the freshness of its life, throw off its past states and forget itself; who in a casual talk would immortalize an hour by making it a seed-plot of principles, and fill the air around with shivering rays of intellectual light amid which his face was as the face of an angel; a man who appreciated Christ as the ideal of our humanity, and not less his washing his disciples' feet. What testimony to the spirit his last days yielded, we have all heard. He died in that high serenity which was appropriate alike to the philosophic dignity of his life, and the simplicity and humbleness of his faith."

On the 15th of June, 1763, the town of South Wilbraham, the birthplace of Horatio Stebbins, was incorporated, and the one hundredth anniversary was appropriately honored. The Reverend Rufus Phineas Stebbins delivered the historical address and his cousin, Horatio, traveled from his Portland parish to be present. The address was too long for complete deliv-

ery. After having read from it for what seemed a decent time the orator offered to desist, but was urged to go on, so he continued until he had spoken for two and a half hours, and even then left much unsaid. It was afterwards published with additions as a history of the town. After the exercises there was a dinner, and then more felicitations.

Among other sons who had come far, Horatio Stebbins was called upon. He said:

"My kinsman, the orator of the day, will pardon me if I have seemed to listen with half-intent and wandering mind, for I have been everywhere to-day, drawn by magic powers of the air. I have been back to childhood. All the hilltops have blazed in recollection, and I see the earth and sky again as they seemed spread above and around my father's house! The hills are mountains and prop the heavens with everlasting support; the 'goat rocks,' halfway up the sloping hillside, rise grim and gray, and my voice echoes in the cave beneath, peopled with shadows and half-terrors; the Scantic River is a flood, rolling in might and majesty toward the sea; the old mill in the mountain pass grinds away, and I grope carefully in its dusky light, with a childish curiosity and wonder; and no huntsman 'in at the death' so thrills with tremulous delight, as I, when, drawing the bleating flock closer and closer, they stand, huddled beneath the great buttonwood, at the sheep-washing. Mr. President, you never saw such a tree as stood before my

grandmother's door; it was a mighty tree! — the noontide glory rested upon its head, its branches reached from the east to the west, and touched the morning and the evening; it was a wonderful tree, by midday or moonlight; beauty, grandeur, and strength had their abiding-place in it; in the winter, cold and bare, it stood shadowless, severe and unrelenting; in summer, it was benignant, kind, and merciful; it always had the same aspect with the heavens, and, like the heavens, seemed to have stood forever! But, the prosaic suggestions of mature years hint that all this is a sort of childish wonder and exaggeration"; and he closed with thoughts suggested by the words of the Preacher, "One generation goeth and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever."

Portland always held a warm spot in Dr. Stebbins's heart, and he was very happy there. One of his parishioners has written of his ministry: "His manner and voice and words in the pulpit excited in others the high thoughts and emotions with which his own mind and heart were kindled." It was a sad day for the parish when it parted company with him. Dr. James De Normandie writes:

"When I was settled over the South Parish in Portsmouth, in 1862, Dr. Stebbins had been for seven years the minister of the First Parish in Portland, and had attracted great attention by his strong preaching and powerful appeals for the Union just as the Civil War was coming on. When I was invited to become his

successor in 1865, I heard much about his ministry; and one incident, told me again and again, is strongly characteristic of the man.

"In his parish, as in all old, wealthy, conservative parishes in New England, there were at that time some whod eplored any reference in the Sunday services to the war or to slavery. They were bound up in commercial interests with the South or they were disturbed about the future of the land, and developed a sudden desire to hear what they called the gospel when they went to church, and not politics, which meant the events that were stirring the whole country.

"One day a committee waited upon Dr. Stebbins to say that they feared there was a good deal of dissatisfaction about his political sermons, and that they might break up the parish. 'Who are the dissatisfied ones?' he asked. They did not care to mention any names; but thought there was, among many, an undercurrent of unrest which boded no good. Some of the best supporters of the church might fall away. 'Who are the satisfied ones?' he asked. 'The most, of course, seem to be; only some of us do not like to hear every Sunday about the disturbing topics of which the week is full.' 'Well,' said Dr. Stebbins, 'I know one person who is satisfied that the minister is doing his duty, and that is Horatio Stebbins; and as long as he feels this, such sermons will be preached.'"

In 1864 Dr. Stebbins received an attractive and earnest call to the church in Springfield. He had a

great fondness for that city, and it at first tempted him, but, after considering all the circumstances, he felt that it was his plain duty to stay by his Portland church, and he declined the honor. When he attended the high school in Springfield he was chore boy in the home of Mr. George Dwight and became much attached to the family. After declining the call he wrote to Mrs. Dwight, his almost lifelong friend:

Portland, March 14, 1864

My dear Mrs. Dwight,

Shall I pour into your ear the story of my lovesick heart? I know you will listen, and pity all my weakness and soothe my pain.

The invitation of the parish at Springfield quite flooded me. The past all rushed in on me and carried me away. The thought of going in my mature youth to be he religious counselor of men whom I obeyed as a servant: the possibility that I might sit at their bedside to talk of eternal things, when the world was sinking into the gray mist, quite unmanned me, in view of the ways of Providence and its guidance of me. I believe in my soul there was not a particle of conceit, but tears, and humility, and love, and gratitude. I have come within an inch of going to Springfield, but, when I put the question to my deliberate moral judgment, I could not find a sufficient cause. I have written to Mr. Chapin declining the invitation. I know how deeply you and Mr. Chapin will regret it, but I

beg of you to offset your disappointment by a thought of the conflict in my own heart. How glad I was to see Mr. Dwight! Will he ever come again? Will the Springfield people ever want to see me again? I hope they will. Now that is all over, let me assure you again and again of my frequent thoughts and undiminished love. HORATIO

The Portland years of ministry were happy and prosperous. Horatio Stebbins steadily grew in favor and in power. The parish had always enjoyed able ministers and high standards, and it was more than satisfied with his service. The period was not without its difficulties. At the opening of the Civil War trying problems presented themselves, and there was constant need for prompt decision on new issues. Men were troubled, for the heavens were dark, and they were called to act where they were in doubt. On the Sunday following the fall of Fort Sumter, the congregation found the pulpit draped with the American flag. It disturbed and shocked some of the more conservative. They had never seen a flag in a church, and they felt that it was out of place. They thought the minister indiscreet, and promptly warned him of the danger in raising an issue that had nothing to do with religion. He had counted the cost, but his religion included loyalty to country, and the flag remained, with its full significance.

While Horatio Stebbins was supporting the cause of

the Union in Far-East Maine, Starr King was zealously sustaining the same cause in the Far-West. Suddenly, from a clear sky, came a thunderbolt of dismay. Starr King had fallen at his post, as much a martyr as any soldier called to die for his country. He had done his full part. California was loyal. To his denominational brethren the loss seemed well-nigh irreparable. A stricken church, representing a great empire, called for the best that could be given them, and the selection of the man who could supply the loss and hold what King had gained was left by common consent to the recognized leader of the Unitarian denomination, Dr. Henry W. Bellows, of New York, a man of consummate ability and discretion. With the full approval of his brethren, he fixed upon Horatio Stebbins as the man best equipped to fill the vacant pulpit. Within thirty days Stebbins had accepted the call and given his consent to a momentous change in the whole course of his life. It was hard to leave Portland. The people were dear to him. They had appreciated and stood by him and he had no desire to change, but he felt that he must not decline a clear duty in a great emergency, whatever regret it involved. Dr. Bellows went to San Francisco to comfort the people and prepare the way, and for four months Dr. Stebbins filled the pulpit of All Souls' Church in New York.

On the 13th of August, 1864, he sailed for California by way of the Isthmus of Panama, taking the

oath of allegiance on the way. With him were his wife, their two children, Mary Louise and Roderick, and his wife's sister, Miss Ellen F. Fisher. They had an uneventful passage and arrived in San Francisco on the morning of September 7.

CHAPTER III

WITH THE SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH

It is fitting that Dr. Stebbins should be allowed to tell the story of his reception in San Francisco and his first impressions. Five days after his arrival he wrote to Mrs. Dwight:

Here we are, as you have already heard by the dispatch. Our voyage has been prosperous, with only the usual toils of the sea, sickness and tedium. First impressions are pleasant. Of course, the object of first interest was the church. It is beyond my expectations, a very impressive structure, externally and internally; all in all, the finest Protestant preaching-house I have ever been in. It seats fifteen hundred people, is lighted from above, has a very fine pulpit and a baptismal font of singular beauty, indeed, of impressive art.

Yesterday morning the services of installation were held, and were attended by an almost vast audience, hundreds going away unable to gain admission. The intensest interest was felt by the people to see the man whom they had taken on trust. Many I noticed weeping, as I went in, touched by memories so dear and tender as have rarely clustered around the name of any public man. It was a trying time. I went through it

with self-possession, but this holding the heart in the teeth is hard and wearing, and I am glad it is over, though I am not sorry for a single twinge of pain my heart has borne. I never felt more free from anxiety than now. The people were evidently put to rest by the morning services, and they breathe free, now that they take up the journey again. I preached a straight, simple little sermon, which my wife was immensely delighted with. The trustees of the church, and the Governor of the State were in the pulpit, and an audience before me of plucky-looking, come-if-you-dare, magnanimous, tender-hearted people. General Wilson (Long Wilson) was there and after the service, he shook me, and blessed me, and laughed and wept.

Yours, H. S.

The First Unitarian Church of San Francisco dates back to 1850. In the marvelous coming the year before of the gold-led, adventure-prompted of every land, many New Englanders were numbered. They formed the backbone of the new community, and were especially active in the commercial and mercantile life of San Francisco. It happened that the Reverend Charles A. Farley, a Unitarian minister formerly in Maine, was in the city, and when this became known to a group of pioneers who were loyal Unitarians and had pleasant memories of church gatherings "at home," he was persuaded to hold a public meeting in a hall on Sacramento Street above Montgomery, and

an advertisement in the *Alta California* gave notice of Unitarian religious services on October 20, 1850. In response a good number assembled, probably nearly all men, as few women had accompanied their husbands in the pursuit of a fortune assumed to be speedily attainable. Some of the men were acquainted, while others met for the first time. They enjoyed the simple service, which was like a breath of fresh air in a sultry day. One man supplied a hymn-book, another a collection of tunes, and a former parishioner of Mr. Farley led the singing with his violin. After the service twenty-five men remained and made plans to continue. On November 17 a church was organized, and Mr. Farley filled the pulpit until April, 1851, when he returned to New England and services were necessarily suspended. Two severe fires discouraged immediate effort, and it was January, 1852, before a fresh start was made. Then a lot was purchased, and the effort to secure a minister began by correspondence. That took time in those days, and it was August before the Reverend Joseph Harrington, who had accepted the call, arrived and began to preach with great promise. In a few weeks he was taken seriously ill and on November 2 he died. Correspondence was resumed, and a church was erected on Stockton Street near Clay Street. The Reverend Frederick T. Gray, of the Bulfinch Street Church, Boston, agreed to come to California for a year. He arrived in June, 1853, dedicated the church soon afterwards, and organized

a Sunday School. At the end of a prosperous year, the Reverend Rufus P. Cutler, of Portland, Maine, became the minister and served nearly five years. The Reverend J. A. Buckingham then filled the pulpit for about ten months until the arrival of the Reverend Thomas Starr King, who had received leave of absence for a year from his parishioners in the Hollis Street Church, Boston. He was not in rigorous health, and hoped that a brief visit to California would restore him. He entered upon the work with interest and enthusiasm, and aroused immediate ardent response. The people flocked to the church in great numbers and their support gave it new impulse and vigorous life. They had been a struggling handful. The church was in debt for twenty thousand dollars, on which it was paying interest at one per cent a month. Nothing daunted, Mr. King threw himself into his arduous work with resistless vigor, and within a year he disposed of the debt and all discouragement. He became so impressed with the opportunity for service that he extended his term indefinitely.

Then came the Civil War, and, when he added patriotic leadership to his exacting church duties, he became the acknowledged champion of national loyalty and California's foremost citizen. He lectured in all parts of the State, aroused the people, and had a large part in cementing a sense of devotion to the Union that turned the scale in doubtful California. He was active politically, and supported with elo-

quence and wit those who represented loyalty. Secession thwarted, he turned his energy to sustaining the Sanitary Commission, of which his close friend, the Reverend Henry W. Bellows, was the head. Under King's brilliant leadership the Pacific Coast, with half a million people, gave to the Commission $1,500,000, one third of the whole amount contributed. The rest of the Union, with 34,000,000, gave $3,000,000, two thirds.

In 1863 King devoted much time and energy to raising money for the beautiful church on Geary Street near Stockton Street, which was joyfully dedicated in January, 1864. He had preached only seven Sundays, when he was attacked with diphtheria. He seemed to have no power of resistance and breathed his last on March 4, confirming a premonition that he would not reach the age of forty. The City, the State, and the Nation were plunged in grief. He was mourned and honored in a degree that seldom falls to the lot of man. On the day of his burial, courts adjourned, after extolling his merits; activities ceased; and from the fortifications in the harbor the Government authorities ordered a salute. A special ordinance was passed permitting the interment of his body beside the church which was itself a real monument of his love, that passers-by might ever be reminded of his service and sacrifice.

Dr. Stebbins paid this tribute to his predecessor at an early anniversary: "Thomas Starr King is the happy name of one of the most interesting men that

American society has ever known. In the union of solid qualities of mind with brilliant fancy sparkling with persuasive oratory, and with sincere and reverent feeling, he was almost without a peer, and perhaps never surpassed. His place during the Civil War gave his life and influence a national import, and made his name as brilliant as the day. Amid his great and pure popularity, there was not a touch of conceit, but he won the admiration of his fellow-men with the sweet simplicity of an unconscious child. The tendency of popularity is often to lower the tone of thought and action, but Mr. King was popular on a higher plane than any other man of his generation. He had a kind of homespun sympathy with all human feeling, that lifted other men up to him, rather than pulled him down. He had a shrewd knowledge of men and experience and was at home with a hunter in the mountains, as in the brilliant circle of literature, philosophy, and religion. His death was mourned by guides at the White Mountains, by miners in the Sierras, by soldiers in the army, by philosophers and legislators. When I came here to the church, soon after I had landed, in company with Henry W. Bellows, it seemed to me as if the building wept."

Horatio Stebbins performed an act of great heroism when he accepted the duty to succeed Thomas Starr King. He knew well what it implied and indulged no self-satisfied expectations. He knew the cost, but was not concerned with anything so comparatively unim-

portant as self-interest, or so unessential as personal success. He indulged no illusion of filling Mr. King's place. He stood on his own feet to make his own place and to do his own work in his own way, with such results as might come, and he was undisturbed and self-respecting.

Horatio Stebbins had striking personality. He was a strongly marked individual. It is related that on one occasion, when he was awaiting the arrival of a member of his family at the Oakland Mole, he noticed two men furtively watching him. Finally they approached, and the bolder of the two hesitatingly addressed him: "Excuse me, but would you mind telling us who you are, as my friend and I have made a bet on it?" They were so impressed by his appearance that they felt sure he was somebody of importance.

Dr. Stebbins once took me with him on a May Meeting pilgrimage to Boston. One evening George William Curtis, admirably presiding, introduced successively, Dr. Hedge, Dr. Stebbins, and Dr. Andrew P. Peabody. In presenting the latter he related an interesting incident. On a certain Sunday morning young Peabody had supplied the Cambridge pulpit. As the congregation passed out, a stranger politely asked an evident member if he could tell him the name of the youthful preacher who had preached so fine a sermon. "That," replied the native, "was Andrew Peabody." "Peabody, Peabody?" exclaimed the stranger, "I was sure he was *some* body."

Dr. Stebbins once met was never forgotten. His erect, towering form, his dignified bearing, his strong face, his expressive eyes, his polished manner arrested attention. His dress was not ecclesiastical, but fitted his calling and suggested a New England gentleman. It seemed never to vary. In the pulpit he was at ease, with no evidence of self-consciousness. He seemed never to strive for effect. He was reverent in manner, deeply earnest, but never excited or vociferous. He expressed his inmost feelings and his full thought, speaking, as he was wont to say, from the level of his mind. His noble voice often thrilled with deep emotion, and he was eloquent in the best sense, but nothing was ever assumed for effect. He spoke straight on, always natural and true, never unduly concerned for immediate results. He held himself to strict responsibility for faithful effort, but what came from it was beyond his control. A sentence from one of his published prayers embodies his deep philosophy: "Help us, each one in his place, in the place which is providentially allotted to us in life, to act well our part with consecrated will, with pure affection, with simplicity of heart; to do our duty, and to leave the rest to God."

It was wholly in this spirit that Dr. Stebbins took up the work of his gifted and brilliant predecessor. He was a very different type of man, less magnetic, more reserved, in comparison even severe, with a strong emotional nature held firmly in check. He had little

popular charm. He was independent, original, and of marked intellectual power. Those who did not know him, or who tried to patronize him, thought him cold. He was incapable of pretense and could not assume fictitious friendliness, but he had a heart that throbbed with sympathy and affection, and he was the staunchest of friends.

Dr. Stebbins was an inspiring preacher. His great faith was transfused, reënforcing that of his hearers. The strength of the spirit was made manifest, and righteousness was held up as reasonable service. His lofty thoughts were clothed in language of great beauty, poetic in imagery and majestic in diction. His voice was rich, full, and thrilling, organ-like in quality. His presence was deeply impressive in its calm power and reverent simplicity. Intellectual honesty was apparent in every word, as he spoke the truth he saw or felt. He was undisturbed by lack of appreciation. Such results as popular applause and admiring throngs were not considered, and he seemed almost distrustful of a crowd. His pulse never quickened when an occasion quite filled the church, and it gave him no especial satisfaction to have Easter marked by chair-filled aisles. He preferred the ordinary routine service, calm and natural, with the usual congregation attentive and worshipful. As a crowd did not inspire him to special effort, so a scanty audience did not depress him. Numbers had no great interest, and he smiled indulgently on those dependent on them.

He once said to me, "I have never been guilty of counting my congregation." He was by no means indifferent to approval and appreciation, but he never depended on it. He moved steadily and serenely, above elation at popularity or dejection at apparent neglect. He was never given to complaint and never was censorious. His people were never scolded for what they failed to do, nor prodded to immediate action. He was long-minded and patient. Nothing excited him to passionate denunciation or frenzied appeal. He never stormed at sinners, but he could be appropriately severe and never failed uncompromisingly to denounce wrong. His gospel was the reality and supremacy of the spirit, the integrity of the Universe, and the beauty of holiness. He was fearless and free. He respected man and he trusted God. He sought abundant life, and he walked humbly, in faithfulness and honor. He commanded complete respect and confidence, and as time went on he gained a firm hold on the affections of his parishioners and the regard of the community.

It was remarkable that a body of people so devoted to King, should readily accept a successor with so different a personality, but the substitution had little effect on personnel or numbers. Mr. King's best friends became the strongest supporters of Dr. Stebbins and the church went steadily on. One reason for this was that the difference was more apparent than

real, more superficial than essential. Their fundamental message was the same. Their idea of God, their regard for man, their love of truth, and their trust in Goodness were the same. No one was called to give up accepted faith or to accept new and strange teachings. Differences in manner or manners and diversity of gifts were unimportant, and the unity and harmony of the church was undisturbed. Again, both were loyal to the denomination, but made it secondary to religion. Their perspective was much the same, and to both the individual was responsible to God as a human being, and not as a church member. Dr. Stebbins looked askance at one who professed religion as something special and uncommon. He ministered to humanity and placed manhood first. He had no great regard for organizations to promote mere church activity, and was somewhat suspicious of people who were anxiously busy and restless. He had little sympathy with the specifically institutional church. His reliance was in the spirit, and he appealed to the spiritual power in man for its translation into life.

He sympathized with all sorts of people and appealed naturally to an uncommonly wide circle of individuals. He was once walking with a lady, one of his parishioners, when a man, shabby in appearance, bowed effusively and asked for a moment's conversation. When Dr. Stebbins rejoined the lady he said: "It seems as if I were father-confessor to all the broken-down hackmen in town. He had to tell me his

troubles. He is doing better, but sometimes he falls down." The incident was typical.

When Starr King was on his death-bed, self-possessed and calm, he asked that no indebtedness should remain on the new church building to harass his successor, but that, free of all debt, it should be his monument — he wanted no other. Dr. Stebbins came with the understanding that this had been done, but the failure of a few persons to meet their pledges had left a considerable sum unpaid and the situation was embarrassing. Dr. Stebbins felt strongly that it was vital for the future of the church to have this debt paid. This was finally accomplished, and the necessary effort resulted in a fixed policy that debt should not be allowed to accumulate. If at the end of any year a deficit develops members of the church subscribe the amount needed and start anew. This habit has had great advantage.

The domestic life of Dr. Stebbins was very beautiful. He came to California accompanied by his wife, already, however, in broken health, and a dearly loved son and daughter. The long illness and the death of his wife, and the marriage and death of his daughter were severe trials, but not consuming fires. Paul adjured the Ephesians "having done all, to stand." Dr. Stebbins did all, and *stood*. His son Roderick, named for his beloved brother, was a great comfort. Their relations were always close. When the small boy reached the church-going age, he would walk home

holding his father's hand. One day his father had preached from the text: "I and my Father are one." The happy boy said: "I could understand that. He and his father were one just as you and I are one." Dr. Stebbins watched the education and development of the thoughtful youth with deep sympathy and was thankful when he chose the ministry as his life-work. Roderick's early settlement in Milton, Massachusetts, was a great satisfaction to him, and it was a blessing to be near him in the closing days of earthly life.

Dr. Stebbins was at first domiciled at 930 Clay Street, above Stockton Street, in what was at that time a favorite residential district. In 1870 he took a suitable house at 16 Ellis Street, which he occupied for seven years, and it was here that his wife, who had long been in failing health, died. Her sister, the children's "Aunt Nellie," died here also. Dr. Stebbins then removed to 739 Bush Street. Here, and afterwards at 831 on the same street, he lived for eight years, and then settled at 1609 Larkin Street to remain seventeen years, until he went back to New England. During all his long residence in the city he occupied only rented houses. He said he considered it too presumptive of permanency for a minister to buy a house, even if he could.

He thoroughly enjoyed hospitality. He took delight in having his friends at his table, and his wonderful, happy table-talk made memorable every opportunity to enjoy it. He lived well but frugally. His tastes were

simple and he was never self-indulgent, but one thing he considered essential: he wanted to keep warm, and delighted in a wood fire. He followed the inherited custom of New England, and in the fall of the year stored his basement with a good supply of cord-wood for winter use. Sometimes the limited size of his grate fireplace necessitated short lengths, but he enjoyed to the full what he could get. Another simple indulgence, from which he derived surprising satisfaction, was a cup of tea of good blend well brewed. He was partial to a certain brand of English breakfast tea, generally had it, and finished his cup with apparent reluctance. I recall an occasion when he and his wife were the first dinner guests of a friendly couple essaying housekeeping. The simple dinner, cooked on a tiny oil stove, had been fairly satisfactory, and when the cup of tea was served the pains taken gained rich reward. Tasting it lingeringly, he turned to Mrs. Stebbins, saying, with a tone and emphasis all his own, "*That*, my dear, is a cup of *tea!*" He was the most appreciative of mortals, and the most courteous, nor did he reserve his courtly manners for friends and favorites. He was as polite and considerate to his cook or the policeman on the beat as he was to his banker or the queenliest lady parishioner.

I remember that once, when he returned from an Eastern trip, I inquired how he was impressed by a man whom I knew he had met. He shook his head as he said: "I was disappointed in him; I heard him

speak discourteously to a cab-driver." He was a consistent democrat, always considerate and kindly, and so it happened that not a man who ever sawed wood for him, or drove his hack, or checked his baggage, failed to be his admiring friend.

Dr. Stebbins was a very tolerant man. He seemed to look for, and find, the good in every one, but there were some things for which he could make no excuse; and he was capable of withering scorn. If a man was mean, if he abused a trust for personal advantage, he need not expect to go unrebuked. Dr. Stebbins could be severe, but he reserved his severity for occasions when it was clearly demanded. He measured men by no petty standard, he was by nature generous, he recognized limitations and was patient with mistakes, but a sneak or a hypocrite he could not treat with complacence.

He was outspoken, apt to say what he thought, and not inclined, even at a funeral, to hold back what he really felt and believed. He reverenced the truth supremely, and had no tact that involved dishonesty. He never sought to please by agreeing with what was popular but doubtful. His integrity was fundamental.

Dr. Stebbins was not only an able preacher, but also a most sympathetic minister. To those bereaved by death he brought rare power of comfort. His feelings were deep and tender, and the tone of his voice and the clasp of his hand brought assurance of sincerity and love. As he mourned with those who mourned,

he rejoiced with those who rejoiced. At a wedding he was very happy, although the ceremony was always impressively serious, never taken as a matter of little importance.

Dr. Stebbins was a noticeable figure on the streets of San Francisco. He was an inch over six feet in height, well-proportioned, well-dressed, deliberate in his movements. He was courteous and considerate, and seemed never hurried or worried. He was always ready to exchange a cordial pleasantry with an acquaintance, but, as he had not a retentive memory for people he had merely met, and never assumed a warmth of feeling for effect, it happened sometimes that with no basis of fact he was thought unresponsive.

While essentially a serious man, engrossed in his great calling, he was not burdened by it. He loved it and was at peace with the world which he found beautiful and kindly. He met its trials trustingly and enjoyed life from day to day. In moments of wholesome relaxation, his mind played with ideas and he had a fund of characteristic humor, not nimble and trifling, sometimes even ponderous, but always kindly and considerate. He was often playful and whimsical. Quaint expressions, apt and unexpected figures of speech stored from his boyhood in New England, or original sayings packed with wit and wisdom made his conversation continuously attractive. The side of his character which made him often the care-free and delightfully entertaining center of a group of friends

was unsuspected by strangers. While naturally reserved and dignified, he was quite capable of genial sportiveness.

At my marriage, in 1871, he was an invited guest. It happened that I had chosen the daughter of devoted Presbyterians, and it was considered proper to call upon their minister to officiate. Dr. Stebbins gladly came, and added to the enjoyment. In great good humor he rallied his brother minister. "Never mind, Mr. H., you shake the bush, and I'll catch the bird." The saying was not intentionally prophetic, but it proved so.

He once said to me, speaking in frank confidence of one we both greatly respected, "G—— is an absolutely honest man. It would be impossible for him to be otherwise, but he would not be a gentleman if he should live a thousand years. He takes to culture as a wild boar would take to a currycomb."

He was friendly with a contractor, who had been greatly perplexed over a lawsuit brought against him in connection with the construction of one of the buildings of the University of California. Mr. George A. Nourse, a trusted parishioner, was attorney for the contractor, who poured out a tale of woe. Dr. Stebbins listened patiently, and then, placing his hand on his friend's shoulder, said: "Never mind! Nourse and I will stick to you as long as you have a cent." The story may lose in the telling, but the answer did not fail in its purpose.

He often mingled philosophy with his humor. One day we dined together at a poor hotel at Merced. He speared a potato and prepared to divest it of its jacket, but it proved hopelessly soggy. He eyed it whimsically and turned to me, and said, with an expressive glance, "Charles, I never eat a potato simply because it *is* a potato."

While Dr. Stebbins was fond of nature and often aroused to truly poetic feeling in response to its beauty, he found his greatest enjoyment in human nature. Man was his chief interest, and when he came back after a summer vacation he was much more likely to recount human experiences than to recall grandeur or loveliness of land or sea. He found the Yosemite Valley tremendously impressive, but I think that he enjoyed two touches of human nature still more. One discovery was a stage-driver, a real character who evidently reciprocated the interest he aroused. Dr. Stebbins shared the front seat with him, and they "talked horse" almost exclusively. A remark of Mr. Horace Davis disclosed the fact that his companion was a clergyman, whereat the driver turned and asked, "Are you a minister?" The doctor replied, "Yes, that's what I am when I'm at home." "Well," rejoined the driver, "I don't know what kind of a preacher you are, but there's a blamed good horse-man spoiled."

The other was the "remarks" of a tourist in an ancient hotel register. As I remember, it modestly read something like this: "John Studebaker, South

Bend, Indiana, president of Studebaker Brothers, who manufacture twenty-four complete wagons every day; six hundred every month; seventy-two hundred every year! — And yet this is nothing, compared with the wonders of the Almighty as displayed in the Yosemite Valley."

CHAPTER IV

WIDER SERVICE

Dr. Stebbins, it is to be remembered, came to California before the ending of the Civil War. Thanksgiving Day of 1864 gave him an opportunity to express his sentiments on the grave national issues of the day. His text was from Second Samuel, xl, 7: "David demanded how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered." His discourse was greatly approved, and, in accordance with the request of Governor Low and others presented the following morning, it was published. It shows a sagacious examination of immediate conditions and has especial interest as indicating his discerning judgment of Lincoln, a judgment amply confirmed later. After a keen and appreciative analysis of Lincoln's character, it closed with these words:

"When I say this of a President of the United States, assailed, abused, misrepresented, hindered, as he always is, by those who have no office but to speak evil and found all their hopes on his fall; when I say, that, in spite of all this, our President has gained in the confidence and respect of the country, I award to him the sublimest honors of moral victory over men! Therefore I rejoice in him, as the exponent of the people, and as a part of God's providence with the country."

On April 23, 1865, Dr. Stebbins again delivered a memorable sermon in which he set forth the essential moral significance of Abraham Lincoln's life and character. He referred to the special characteristics by which obstacles were overcome and signal achievements reached. He found in him "a certain theme of mind, a fine instinct for what is, and a belief in justice." And he continued, in sentences here somewhat condensed: "An instinct of truth, which guides as surely as attraction holds the stars, pervades all Mr. Lincoln's thinking and all his jest and anecdote and drollery. It is the quality that enables him to state just what he thinks and what he means. The principles of our government and the nature of the war have never been stated so clearly as by him, and no man has seemed to have so fair and consistent a record as he. When by events he came to administration of affairs, he took no double or devious course and no backward step. No man was more conscious than he that he was raised up on the tide of events, and he knew that all his power lay in the spirit of the time. He held to his theme so surely, so naturally, that events not only guided him, but they were the unfolding of his own convictions. As a natural result of Mr. Lincoln's instinct of truth he believed in man. Never was a man more in sympathy with the people or more completely imbued with those ideas of social justice and individual rights which are the spirit of our institutions and their only ground of right to be. The prevailing political faith of the coun-

try in past years has been a stout advocacy of liberty. There has been no persuasion, strong and invincible, that justice is a component part of the idea of freedom. There has been no idea in this country of freedom as a principle of conservatism and development. Amid the shock of civil war God is teaching us what we have been slow to learn, that man is the chiefest thing on earth. To raise him up to the rights, the privileges, and the immunities of existence is the great purpose of social order, and the government which is not filled with that purpose has no right to be."

Dr. Stebbins was soon in demand for addresses before various organizations. He rested satisfied with no perfunctory performance, but always had something of real value to say, worth the hearing. The Society of California Pioneers rejoice in and glorify the past, harking back to the early days and felicitating themselves on their pioneering. In September, 1865, he addressed them and said, among other things well to heed:

"Nothing can save us from Spanish decline and Mexican littleness but communication with the world, that rapid and sure intercourse with human society which assimilates the interests of mankind. We must boldly affirm this, not in lugubrious strain of croaking, but as the firm ground of our hopes concerning the growth and prosperity of our State, namely, that the powers that have made her prosperity thus far have done their best, and that no great impulse of

human affairs denoting permanent progress can be felt here, until the great highways are opened over sea and land, and the world — the many-sided industries, arts, commerce, and literature — is imparted to us."

On May 25, 1865, Dr. Stebbins was invited to make the principal address at the dedication of the magnificent Mountain View Cemetery at Oakland. It was received with great favor, and it has permanent worth as indicating his calm and trustful view of death and immortality. He expressed the conviction that it is man's distinction and the privilege of intelligent faith to look forward with composure to the final dissolution of his earthly frame. It is the distinction of his nature, elevated by religious thought, to contemplate death as an event in life and no accident of chance, nor calamity of darkness. It is permitted to him to prepare for that event as inevitable though uncertain in its date. This is striking testimony to the truth that life is moral and disciplinary.

"The moral and religious import of death is that all man's labors, enjoyments, and possessions are to be pursued and held as subject to a higher power. It mingles the Divine Providence in the daily thoughts of men, urging them out beyond the domain of time and sense to the realities of spiritual existence. Thus death, by its constant presence in human life, is the great teacher of man. It is this confidence of man in a never-ending existence that not only saves our human lot from being unendurable, but makes exist-

ence cause of gratitude and joy. In the light of this truth every man can thank God that he *is*, and the darkest griefs may be illuminated by hope, the heaviest griefs may be borne with patience, and defeated good may believe that its promise will yet be kept."

Among the adjustments necessary in removing to California is acquirement of the requisite composure to meet gracefully an earthquake when it seeks recognition. A New Englander, through long experience, grows immune to terror from electric bolts. He is used to the fateful flash from above, but he has no experience with insecurity from below, and even a slight tremor is unnerving. It frequently happens that our shocks come conveniently in the night when those who turn pale do not show it, or where the sufferer recovers in pleasant privacy, but sometimes he is compelled to exhibit his emotion where all may see whether nerve or nerves control. The earthquake of October 8, 1865, occurred on Sunday, about the time of dismissal after morning service. Those who heard Dr. Stebbins that morning were singing the closing hymn. A sudden tremble increased sharply. The building was grasped by tremendous power and severely wrenched. Through my mind flitted the thought, What weakness there must be in a large unsupported roof! A good congregation with blanched faces awaited results. It was a moment of nervous terror, which would have quickly passed if the central pipe in the organ at the preacher's right had not top-

pled from its place and vaulted over the choir, falling into the space in front. That was enough. No one waited for the benediction or other formal dismissal. The church was emptied with great promptitude. Many were soon standing in the street with hymn-books still in their hands. A startling coincidence was that the interrupted hymn was a paraphrase of the passage from Isaiah portraying the end of all things, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat. We held evening services at that time, and for the last hymn that evening Dr. Stebbins gave out the one left unfinished in the morning. We sang it to the troubled end, and the usurped benediction was then calmly pronounced.

All sorts of persons called on Dr. Stebbins for all sorts of service. In a letter of that pathetic humorist, Samuel L. Clemens, to his mother at St. Louis, written on December 4, 1866, he says: "I am thick as thieves with the Rev. Dr. Stebbins. I am running on preachers now altogether; I find them gay. Stebbins is a regular brick. Whenever anybody offers me a letter to a preacher I snaffle him on the spot." From the context it is indicated, that, in view of a contemplated trip to New York, he had the inspiration to take letters of introduction to ministers there. He evidently had special designs on Dr. Bellows, and called on Dr. Stebbins to secure credentials. What he goes on to write bears every mark of the source of its inspiration. "I shall make Dr. Bellows trot out the fast nags of

the cloth for me when I get to New York. Bellows is an able, upright, and eloquent man, a man of imperial intellect and matchless power. He is Christian in the true sense of the term." What a difference and gain to Mark Twain and the world it might have made if to the chemical content of his soul he had added at this time a liberal infusion of the fundamental trust and love of Stebbins and Bellows!

It must be borne in mind that the San Francisco church had stood like a lone lighthouse on the Pacific shore for fourteen years before Dr. Stebbins came, and it was two years more before he had a neighbor nearer than St. Louis. In May, 1866, he went to Portland and counseled with the fine group of people who had prepared the way there for a church. They raised twelve hundred dollars, bought a lot on the edge of the woods, and authorized him to find their minister. He corresponded with the Reverend William G. Eliot, of St. Louis, and with his son, Thomas L. Eliot, then about to enter the ministry. In December, 1867, when the chapel was completed, the worthy son of a worthy sire came out, by the way of Panama, to become their preacher. At that time we were experimenting in San Francisco with theater preaching, then tried out generally, and we held successful meetings at the Metropolitan Theater. The audiences were large and the singing led by our devoted basso, Wunderlich, was truly "wonderful." People seemed to like it, but interest fell off as the novelty waned and

they showed no disposition to graduate into the church. We considered it not worth the cost and trouble. The experiment is connected in my mind with the sight one Sunday of an attractive young couple in a prominent box who, I found on inquiry, were the Eliots on their way to Portland. For the next ten years the Portland church was the only one to keep us company. In 1877 Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Diego were added to the list.

Up to 1869 we always spoke of our minister as "Mr." Stebbins, for he was not one to allow a title not wholly and regularly authorized, but his deserts were then recognized by Bowdoin College which conferred upon him the degree of D.D., Doctor of Divinity.

On one matter, at least, Dr. Stebbins had a well-settled opinion that was quite at variance with popular prejudice. He was not at all in sympathy with the Chinese exclusion legislation and he never missed an opportunity to express his feeling that a man of China is still a man. On December 1, 1866, a banquet given to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company was attended by leading citizens and the officials of the company, and also by the Chinese Consul and other distinguished representatives of the Orientals. Captain Eldredge, Governor Stanford, and others spoke. To Dr. Stebbins was assigned the eighth regular toast: "Commerce the Ally of Religion and Civilization." Before his formal reply he said: "I but reiterate the sentiment of every man here when I express the pleasure

I feel in meeting merchants of China in the mutual exchange of good-will with merchants of San Francisco. May that interchange never cease, so long as value seeks equilibrium on the earth, or the wind of popular liberty rushes to fill the vacuum of despotism."

He had further opportunity for such expression in 1868 at the remarkable reception given to Anson Burlingame and the Chinese Embassy at the Lick House. He was very happy on such occasions when he lifted public consideration of large subjects to a level of statesmanship, and made shuffling politicians seem contemptible in comparison. He was greatly respected by broad-gauged men and thinkers in public life and was always heard with attention.

A little later Japan sent an Embassy Extraordinary to the United States. The distinguished representatives were royally entertained, and the culminating feature in San Francisco was a banquet. Over it presided the Governor, Newton Booth, and among the distinguished speakers was Dr. Stebbins. His brief but stirring remarks aroused enthusiasm, and also some antagonism. The *Bulletin* account, omitting the introductory words and the frequent interjection of applause, follows:

"An ancient empire outside of Christendom, numbering more than thirty millions of souls, with a civilization unique, peculiar, having laws, polity, manners, and religion its own, standing in august and sullen grandeur apart from the general movement of the

world's life, with a history running back to the earliest periods of recorded time, and beyond into dim twilight of the mythopeic age; a history and civilization compared with which Christendom itself is young, even the latest child of time; whose royal line of kingly blood flowed down through centuries before Cæsar entered England, before Moses received the Law in the glory-smitten heights of Sinai, sends forth an embassy of peace to all nations, to observe the arts, industries, manners, customs of the modern age!

"To a poetic imagination, it seems a repetition of the ancient story of the wise men, the astronomic Magi, led by a star to the place where the young child lay, for that star still leads mankind where the ages are born, and stands above the place where the best thoughts of humanity are nurtured.

"Hail! illustrious descendants of the ancient stock, inspired with wonder and desire! The motive that impels you is a more fragrant gift than aromatic spices, frankincense and myrrh! Welcome to this western shore of the Western World! this cradle of the latest born of nations!

"Governor, the manifest suggestion of this occasion is the vast appliances of intelligence which have been made within the last century to overcome the obstacles of time and space, and which, while they perfect the earth as the abode of man, make such a meeting as this possible. Vast mountain chains, which presented impassable barriers between nations and

races, have been dissolved by noble engineering, and the sea, 'that flaw in the planet,' no longer separates the nations. Floating bridges swing on it through all the latitudes, binding the peoples of the earth together in a common destiny. Our transcontinental road, together with the Suez Canal, has practically annihilated one third of the periphery of the globe, and there are those here who shall not taste death before the magnetic current shall be made complete, and the spark of human intelligence, unquenched by multitudinous waters, shall report itself around the earth in advance of the sun!

"The inner idea of this vast conquest is the unity and ultimate perfectibility of the human race. Commerce, which is the inspiration of man's noblest achievements over nature, is simply the expression of the mutual dependence of mankind; the reaffirmation of that which divine philosophy teaches, that no man, no community, no nation, no race, can fulfill its destiny in an exclusive and isolated life. As the globe is a unit of organism, holding every island, sea, and continent in one organic whole, so Commerce, which is the expression of the mutually dependent life of mankind, draws the populations of the earth by the attraction of common want and a common end. Already the exclusive system gives signs of modification under the benign influence of well-regulated interests and mutual regards. From henceforth no exclusive, isolated, independent civilization can endure. Before

the spirit of the age its adamantine walls are dust that vanishes at a breath.

"One word more! Nobody is here but ourselves, and that one word I will say. We here are providentially placed in near relation with these exclusive civilizations. The changes wrought by transcontinental communication have changed forever the area of commercial distribution for this city. We can never do the business of the Mississippi Valley, and probably we shall not extend our inland commercial area beyond the summit of the great mountain chain. To compensate for that, we must gather up the islands of the sea and push our trade to the unnumbered populations of the Asiatic world. But our position is anomalous. While we are here to-night, wooing the commerce of old empires, you, Governor, as the representative of one political party, and ex-Governor Haight, as the representative of the other, are committed to a policy to exclude these people from our shores! The position is absurd and ridiculous. As a policy, it is nonsense; as a principle, it is nowhere. It is rag-tag and bob-tail. If any of you cheap politicians have won a penny by it in the passions of an hour, beware when you put that penny in your purse, lest the eagle on the reverse of your coin stick his talons through and clutch the face of liberty!"

The account says "prolonged applause," but it was a daring challenge to the political leaders, and a rebuke to the politicians that they little enjoyed.

Dr. Stebbins was deeply touched and severely tested by the death of his very dear brother, Randolph, in 1870. His grief was profound. On April 24 he wrote to his half-brother in New England:

DEAR CALVIN,— I am wading heart-deep through my griefs, and, although I almost lose my breath sometimes, I keep on my feet. I am anxious to learn all little details of the family and the burial, even to the very color of the fresh clean earth that received his precious body to its kind embrace. Did you pray at the funeral? I don't know whether I could if I had been there, but my heart longs to mingle and flow in the common stream of fraternal sympathy. Never was sight of Immortality so clear as it is now, and never have so great consolations soothed my aching breast. Yet my morning hours have a strange sense of loneliness, as if the very sunbeams were withdrawn from the day, and my night-watches are as if the whole universe of worlds were still. This eclipse of earthly brightness reveals the eternal spaces as no midday splendor can, and I am impressed, inspired, and encouraged by the thought of the vast unknown and unquarried truth that lies in the abysses of our nature. Neither the height of the stars, nor the depth of the earth can measure it. What a power is this personality, into communion with which we have been so tenderly brought! How it sways my heart, away across the world, giving me some conception of the

Infinite personality whose inspiration is the life of all intelligence and whose power sustains all things.

Three days later he writes:

My dear Calvin: Yours came this morning. It is a great comfort to read your tender story of grief. In Randolph we have been, and are, indeed, blessed. Though there seems something gone from the very air of my daily life, I yet feel as if something new had come to me in the depth of my affection and the serenity of my love. How the words of Christ are fulfilled. "If I be lifted up, I shall draw all hearts unto me!" I had a very full letter from Roderick [his elder brother] three days ago. He is, as you say, the appointed consoler of us all, an angel of God, and divine messenger. When I think of his sorrows, and his broken life, my heart aches, and loves its aches, for him. Do write to him often, Calvin, and keep bright the chain of fraternal love. You speak of Lucinda's grief. Tell her to be comforted by sorrow itself, and, in the pain of earthly ties sundered, to learn the joy of self-loss. If I could only sit down by your side, O unconquerable space! Horatio

On May 18, he wrote again: "Your little reference to Randolph's grave is comforting. I have stood there in imagination at sunrise and sunset and midday. I have walked through the meadow and orchard, and lain down on the green grass and wept. I have risen

up from the earth with strength and peace, and found the way of duty full of comfort and eternal power."

In October he mentions to his brother that he has been under the pressure of considerable personal trial in the affliction of friends, and adds: "Since Randolph died, it has seemed as if the sorrows of men were laid on me with redoubled weight, and that God would make me minister to an innumerable company of broken-hearted. I am so poor in all perfunctory ways, and so incapable of conventional methods of ministration, that every human experience seems to fall on my naked heart. Don't think I am sentimental or weak: I enjoy the pain, and bear glad testimony of its superiority to the flesh."

Dr. Stebbins was uncomplaining, but he must have suffered from loneliness in the lack of ministerial association. He saw few ministers of his own faith. Occasionally one came to the Coast for a brief period of sight-seeing, and the most was made of such visits, but they were, like other angels' visits, few and far between. In the meantime he had practically no professional intercourse. There were a number of more or less liberal individuals among the orthodox clergy, but for the most part they held aloof. His attitude was decidedly friendly. He was never antagonistic, and never indulged in controversy or attack, but friendliness in return was apparently more than he could expect. The Catholic representatives seemed more inclined to fraternize with him than others.

Dr. Stebbins had respect for the opposite pole of his faith, and felt that there was no logical ground between a church of reason and a church of authority. That he was willing to do his part in maintaining friendly relations is established by an incident revealed after his death.

Dr. George C. Adams was the minister of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco when Dr. Stebbins died, and he sent to the *Congregationalist* a touching tribute. He related the courtesy and kindliness of a prompt call made by Dr. Stebbins when Adams came, a stranger to the city. The cordial welcome had given him courage and confidence. Soon afterward Dr. Stebbins accepted an invitation to a reception given by the Congregational Church. Several other ministers had referred in their addresses to the ministers present who represented various other churches, but all stopped short before they reached mention of the Unitarian. It was very noticeable and the discourtesy made the audience uncomfortable. Finally Dr. Stebbins was called upon to speak. He gave no indication of having felt any slight. "He rose and spoke so ably and on so much higher ground than had been taken by any other speaker that the audience were charmed. He made without question the best address of the evening." Dr. Adams added: "His influence was great, his integrity was unquestioned, and people of every faith and no faith believed in him, and knew he was like the Master."

It was a red-letter day when men of his own faith stood by Dr. Stebbins in his pulpit, and whatever their high reputation in the church might be, we had a feeling that he never suffered in comparison. In the long course of Dr. Stebbins's service he welcomed and entertained most of the Unitarian leaders, and others. I recall Peabody, Furness, Eliot of St. Louis and Eliot of Cambridge, Hale, Chadwick, Savage, Joseph Henry Allen, Fenn, Williams, Camp, Alger, and many others. Dr. Stebbins was a flattering host. He was happy in having his friends around him, and the atmosphere of his home was delightful.

Dr. Stebbins heartily enjoyed the visit of Ralph Waldo Emerson in April, 1871, when he came with his daughter in company with Mr. John M. Forbes, of Milton. Mr. Emerson was delightfully simple and unassuming, prepared to be pleased with all he saw. He visited the Geysers and the Yosemite Valley, which he felt was one of the few things "that came up to the brag." One Sunday evening, to our great satisfaction, he read his essay on "Immortality." In the thought that a course of his lectures would be appreciated, Mr. Horace Davis, who had visited him at Concord, and I called on him at the Occidental Hotel to gain his consent. His daughter had put a few lectures in their trunk, thinking they might be called for, and he was glad to accommodate us. The lectures were given at his convenience, between trips. The first audiences were good, but curiosity seemed to be the leading

motive of attendance, for toward the end the audiences dropped off, whereat Dr. Stebbins remarked: "I thought the people would tire in the sockets of their wings, if they tried to follow him." Emerson was very friendly and approachable. He went over the church with interest, and was particularly pleased with an upper chamber over the Sunday-School room that Mr. King had provided as a refuge from the over-persistent. He remarked, with his gentle smile, "I think I should like a study beyond the orbit of the chambermaid." We paid him for his lectures in twenty-dollar gold pieces, the first he had ever seen.

Mozoomdar, the Hindoo reformer, was another lovable personality, who impressed us all very favorably. It was a memorable evening when, in Dr. Stebbins's parlor, he seated himself on the floor in his native fashion, and we, a stiff-kneed and perverse generation, attempted to unbend and follow him.

Dr. Stebbins had unbounded admiration for Dr. Hedge, and expressed his esteem and regard on many occasions. In a letter to his brother Calvin, written early in his settlement in San Francisco, he says: "I have read Hedge's address in the *Examiner*. How mightily it sounds away here! Well, he is the man of us all. I think he is so much ahead, as to have no second." Many years afterward Dr. Hedge came to the Pacific Coast, and it was a great satisfaction for the two to meet.

On March 9, 1873, Dr. Stebbins, at the conclusion

of his sermon, spoke with great tenderness in memory of a fellow-minister, Dr. Joseph Henry Allen of Northborough, Massachusetts, who had died February 20, aged eighty-four years. Dr. Allen was the beloved minister of the family of Mr. Stebbins. His active ministry extended over a period of more than fifty years, and his life seemed to Dr. Stebbins like a connecting link between the present and the former age, one of the class of men who kept alive the ideal of Goldsmith's Village Preacher. He spoke of him as an important part of the life of that lovely New England town, a man of great simplicity, whose desires, subdued to reason and conscience, gave him great resources of content and peace.

"As a preacher he handled the Word of God with that reverent and devout good sense which makes it daily bread to men. As a counselor and friend, he was wise, tender, and true. As a guardian of public education, he placed the schools in the foremost rank of the time. In social intercourse he was the life of every circle, and gave to manners a tone of intelligence and refinement. His fine taste for gardening and the culture of fruit and ornamental trees formed his appropriate recreation and made the parsonage and the village church lovely. His household was ordered with that consummate discretion, independence of mind and feeling, genial, urbane, affectionate spirit, that make a house a home: and with that unprepared, yet ever-ready, open-door hospitality that causes its light to

shine upon all. How many have been cheered by that light! How many have been encouraged by its shining and warmed by its glow!"

As Dr. Allen illustrated for Dr. Stebbins the life of a New England parish minister, so, in an address given in the same month of March, 1873, in memory of Judge Oscar Lovell Shafter, of the California Supreme Court, he summed up the characteristics of a remarkable jurist; and this address, like the other, indicates the trend of Dr. Stebbins's mind and his recognition of those qualities which make the highest types of human character.

After noting Judge Shafter's practical ability — his energy, good sense, and integrity of nature — he analyzed his intellectual and spiritual perceptions. He said:

"He had that appreciation of the law of laws, the unity and generalization of truth, that gives moral dignity to the intellect and the perspective of moral dignity to all principles. When theories of deep human interest were touched, his mind kindled along its summits with fine enthusiasm of poetic feeling and insight. He did not belong to that class of minds always emphatic never forcible; neither to that other class, "small pot soon hot," whose enthusiasm is in the blood and not in the idea. His mind sometimes lay calm, silent, sullen as the summer sea, and rolled with sleepy strength, and in all the manifestations of his intellectual activity there was something of that re-

pose which is the measure of reserved power and the background of all greatness. His religious faith was simple and human. He arrived at his conviction of the character of God from the nature of man and the experience of human life. He inferred that justice is God's justice, that mercy is God's mercy, that love is God's love; and that the expression of these in humanity is the expression of the divine. I think, in commending himself to the Almighty maker of men, he would, in the devout simplicity of his heart, have forgotten all the honors and respect he enjoyed from his fellow-men, and thought only that he was a *man*."

I hardly dare allude to the generosity of Dr. Stebbins's judgment and the boundless kindness that year after year added to my debt of obligation and love. At a time of deep trial, his tenderness and sympathy were a great blessing. When he had done all, he begged me to promise to dine with the family at least once every week. For seven years it was my happy privilege to share Friday's dinner. When I married again, he said they must release me from the regular routine, but that I must come and bring my wife often, and that they should expect me once a week for luncheon. Then, for eight years, as long as he remained in California, I shared weekly a happy luncheon with his family. What honor! What blessing! Nor was I the only favored one. For years a widow and her two daughters shared another weekly dinner, and several bachelors were regularly expected at breakfast, lunch-

eon, or dinner. Dr. Stebbins's home and his heart were open to many, and he made them feel that they were giving as much as they were receiving. His abounding generosity was a great source of power and influence.

It was not from lack of opportunity that Dr. Stebbins did not leave his western parish after a brief term of service. He received many calls to return to the attractive East, all of which he respectfully declined. In 1873, a second attempt, in behalf of the church in Cambridge, gave the San Francisco parish occasion to express its sentiments. On January 28, at a meeting of the congregation an address, prepared by Horace Davis, moderator of the church, was unanimously adopted, signed by the trustees and three hundred and fifty-six members within easy reach, presented to Dr. Stebbins, and published in the *Christian Register*. From the first Mr. Davis was the steadfast friend and supporter of the successor of Starr King, whom he had dearly loved. With equal loyalty he became the unfailing right hand of Dr. Stebbins, who valued and appreciated him. In this earnest plea he set forth the urgent need of San Francisco, and declared that Cambridge ought to allow its minister to continue the vitally important work he had successfully begun. He referred to the deep sense of the value of his ministrations felt by his people, their personal affection, and the loss to the church and the liberal cause that would follow his

departure. Pledging cordial aid and support, the address concluded: "As you esteem our love and confidence, we pray that you will continue your ministrations among us." There was probably less danger than they apprehended. Dr. Stebbins once said to me: "I have had but three parishes, and if my life were again before me, I think I would choose to have but one."

Dr. Stebbins early became interested in the College of California, which graduated its first class, three in number, in 1864, the year he came. It was located in Oakland, and represented large hopes. On June 7, 1865, he addressed a meeting of the alumni, and the next year he delivered the Commencement oration. In the newspaper English of the period it was pronounced "brief, pertinent, philosophical, effectively delivered, and warmly applauded."

He became a member of the board of trustees, and later was elected president of the board. He was influential in transferring the organization and property to the State as the foundation for the University of California, subsequently located at Berkeley. He was appointed a regent for the State, and was reappointed from time to time until he had served continuously for twenty-six years. He was not, himself, a minute scholar, but he knew the means of scholarship and was without doubt completely equipped for leadership in formulating and sustaining a really great university. The other members of the board deferred to him with advantage to the cause.

Professor William Carey Jones, the authority on this subject, in an address on "The Making of the University," says: "As I have studied the formative agencies of the University of California, I have come to believe that above all others the mind that gave largeness and character to the university movement was that of Dr. Stebbins. The College of California, designed to be a religious but not sectarian institution, was popularly believed to be controlled in the interest of one or another of the evangelical churches, but its really non-sectarian character is shown by the fact that Starr King and later Horatio Stebbins were on its board of trustees. To Dr. Stebbins's broad vision and surpassing intellect is largely due the realization of a University of California out of three separately conceived ideas. In February, 1868, Dr. Stebbins wrote for the college paper an article of profound import, entitled 'Why do We Cherish the University?' He was cherishing the university before the university was born: just when perchance proper care was needed to give to the embryo the form and character and stamina that would enable it to achieve its highest purpose. The concluding sentences of this paper read: 'This, then, is our vocation, to make men more manly and humanity more humane; to augment the discourse of reason, intelligence, and faith, and to kindle the beacon fires of truth on all the summits of existence. To this end and for this cause may our University stand so long as the sun and moon shall endure.'"

Dr. Stebbins's fostering care did not cease with the birth of the institution; as regent he continued to cherish it and to rejoice in the marvelous growth. Two outstanding figures of the governing body were Dr. Stebbins and Mr. A. S. Hallidie: Dr. Stebbins in all that pertained to academic and cultural interests, and to their development on the grand scale; Mr. Hallidie in what pertained to the engineering department and, especially and above all, to the financial safeguarding of the University. Valuable coöperation by Durant, Ashburner, Tompkins, and others is to be freely acknowledged, but it is quite within bounds to say that Dr. Stebbins was the controlling influence on the board of regents from the beginning to the inauguration of President Wheeler.

Think for a moment what is involved in holding a position by the appointment of constantly changing governors for twenty-six years. What steadiness of purpose and degree of satisfaction are implied! Positive persons are sure to arouse opposition, and envy is a plant of vigorous growth. A Unitarian in an Evangelical community is at popular disadvantage, constantly distrusted by those who consider religious liberals dangerously unsound; yet here an uncompromising, outspoken independent is retained for well-nigh a generation, and left to have his own way in a place of first importance. Such a public service is almost unprecedented, and the volume of benefit it conferred is hardly calculable.

Dr. Stebbins had a definite conception of the part that education should play in the formation of character. The article to which Professor Jones referred sets forth the end of the University in such characteristic fashion that it is included in the extracts from his writings, collected at the end of this book.

Perhaps no one in California appreciated Horatio Stebbins as fully as his friend Horace Davis, and association with him gave Davis a clear insight into his educational ideals and service. In an address at the University in 1909 he said:

"Dr. Stebbins was a faithful servant of the University of California for many years. Next to religion his dearest interest in life was education. Next to his God he thought most and deepest on the problem of human life: men and women in the concrete, not in the abstract, were his constant study. He was interested in science; but he felt a greater interest in the scientist. He loved art; but the artist was dearer to him than art. Reserved and self-contained in his bearing, his heart overflowed with sympathy for his fellow-men. This was the root of his deep interest in education. It was not so much the love of literature or the love of science, as it was the love of men.

"The early years in the life of the University were a critical period, calling for strong men and wise counsels. Forty years ago the people of the State had little sympathy with higher education. They were strong, vigorous men, who had crossed the continent for gain

or adventure; they were absorbed in the problems of material life, in developing the resources of a new land. They had little leisure to ponder questions of intellectual life or the moral destiny of the community. The schools were inferior; what little university life existed was on a low plane, making it difficult to maintain this institution on a basis at all commensurate with the standards of the older American colleges. It needed deep conviction and resolute courage to proclaim the highest standard and hold to it in the face of opposition and outcry. Another danger that threatened the young University was jealousy and secession. The farmers wanted to secede and form a separate college of their own. To yield to this was to destroy the solidarity of the University, to open the way for ultimate dissolution into separate independent departments — here a farmer's college, there a technological institute, somewhere else a school of arts and letters. It took a long and hard fight to head off these class prejudices and maintain the integrity of the University as the single head of the educational system of the State.

"Such were the trials and labors of those early regents. In response to their courage and faith a brighter day has dawned. The public schools have been lifted to higher standards, and the University has risen to an honorable place in the front rank of American universities. Dr. Stebbins was a leader among those men who guided its infant steps and set

the pace for future attainment; and his confident faith, his high ideals, his resolute courage, were strong factors in determining the future of the University.

"When Mr. D. O. Mills was about to make his generous gift to the University, he asked his friend Dr. Stebbins in what form the benefaction would do the greatest good. The Doctor, true to his ideal conceptions, recommended the endowment of a Chair of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy. At the time it was criticized as a barren, unpractical gift; but Mr. Mills's choice vindicated itself. No one influence inside the University has done so much to lift the standard of culture and to mellow the atmosphere, as this happy endowment of Mr. Mills, the Chair long filled by the revered Dr. Howison.

"Dr. Stebbins has passed away; but he lived to see the fruit of his labors. He saw the University grow in wealth, in power, in standing and influence, far beyond anything he could have conceived in those days of small things. All honor to those courageous men of the early days, whose faith never wavered, whose ideals were never dimmed! They planted the seed; we reap the fruit."

In considering Dr. Stebbins's contribution to the cause of education in California, one may well speak here of his interest in Stanford University, founded some twelve years later than the period covered in this chapter, but carrying forward the same convictions of the worth of study and culture. He contributed

in many important ways to its formation and administration. He was a trusted friend of both Senator and Mrs. Stanford, and they often consulted him. From the nature of things he could not take an active part in details, but he could and did give frequent counsel. He retained his position on the board of trustees until his removal to New England. He took part in many public occasions there, and the University and the splendid gift that made it possible were the subject of notable addresses.

In 1885 he preached a sermon that reviewed the career of Senator Stanford and the founding of the University. He spoke of it as "a great benefaction, unequaled in our country, or in Christendom, it may be, in substantial grandeur or in its prophetic idea." He spoke freely of Senator Stanford, as the product of a new epoch of human affairs and modern thought, a man of good sense by nature, fitted to grow wiser, on whom dawned the railroad age, bringing with it a success into which entered many causes beyond human control. The possession of vast wealth brought him the idea of responsibility and duty. "Grief and money," said Dr. Stebbins, "are alike naturally selfish: one thinks of its possessions, the other thinks of its own sufferings. Happy are those whose possessions are transfigured by a glory from above and whose sufferings are transformed to sympathies."

It is interesting to know that Dr. Stebbins's influence in these great universities did not cease with his death.

His daughter Lucy is the honored Dean of Women and professor in the University of California at Berkeley, and his son Horatio holds an assistant professorship in the engineering department of Stanford University at Palo Alto.

Dr. Stebbins's service to education was not confined to the two great universities. He was always ready to give his best thought and his long experience to aid the public schools generally. He was frequently called to address school institutes and gatherings of teachers, or to advise with principals or teachers. He was profoundly interested in education as an influence, and was consulted by many who had plans for advancing it. He was named by the will of James Lick as trustee of the California School for Mechanical Arts and he served for many years on its controlling board, with large influence in establishing its excellent foundation and its wise control. On its board were many of his nearest friends, and under their judicious management it became a most successful school, second perhaps to none of its character in the country. It has now drawn two other large endowments into working coöperation, and promises to become an important educational power.

CHAPTER V

RIPENED YEARS

On July 4, 1876, San Francisco was called to do her utmost to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia. It happened that, while the signers were deliberating on their act, Lieutenant Moraga, of Anza's command, was getting out the timber to build the Mission Dolores; and San Francisco was then virtually born, as a Spanish city. Thus it was a double celebration and an important event. In the twelve years of Dr. Stebbins's residence his reputation for ability and eloquence had been firmly established and to him was entrusted the oration on this day, great for the Nation and the city. His address was a lofty reiteration of the spirit of the Declaration which meant an extension of freedom and equality of opportunity to share the moral and spiritual rights of man. A sentence or two gives its keynote:

"We affirm and declare to-day, as the fathers in 1776, that all men are free; and we mean by it that fundamental fact of human nature by which man is man, endowed by Heaven with the power to choose between good and evil, and to direct his course toward those ends that seem to him best! We mean that the office of Government is to protect that freedom, and

not to encroach upon it; to throw around it the environments of law, that under law it may be liberty indeed! We affirm and declare to-day, as the fathers in 1776, that all men are equal! Hear it, O Heaven! and give ear unto it, O Earth! We mean by this that that human nature, whose inspiration is reason and conscience, is divine, and we avow that progress of mankind is grounded in this common nature of man. On this we base our hope of human progress, and our faith in human destiny."

In August, 1876, Dr. Stebbins stopped at Chicago on his way eastward, and from there he sent me a note with news that concerned his future happiness, that I was delighted to receive:

My dear Charles and Alice:

Your goodness to me, always manifest, will readily appreciate my temper toward you when I tell you that I am engaged to be married, at some future day, to Miss Lucy E. Ward, of Chicago.

Horatio Stebbins

Miss Ward's father, Doliver Ward, went to California in 1850 and died there the following year. Her maternal grandfather, James Wibray, was an Englishman who, like other young men in those days, "ran away before the mast." He became a much-beloved and honored sea-captain, who commanded packet-ships sailing between Liverpool and New York, and

later between New York and New Orleans. He brought his family to Illinois in 1835 by way of the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes. His wife, the "little grandmother," and daughter played an heroic part in early pioneer days on the prairies; and the daughter married Doliver Ward at the age of eighteen.

In due time the marriage took place and a blessed Providence gave Dr. Stebbins twenty-six years of exceptionally happy life. He had perfect sympathy, devoted love, and solicitous care. A son, Horatio Ward, and a daughter, Lucy Ward, completed the family. He was a most affectionate and wisely indulgent father, with complete confidence in his children. It was a happy home in every respect, and his fond hopes found abundant fulfillment. His daughter was a precious "Jewel" and "the boy" was as companionable as he himself had been to his own father. He liked to repeat a remark that "the little fellow" made one day as they came, hand-in-hand, home from church: "Papa, I don't think I understood much of the sermon, but it made a good impression." He watched with intense interest the development of the children, and to see them take their place in life added greatly to his peace and joy.

In 1864 the church at San Francisco stood alone on the Pacific Coast and there was no opportunity for exchange of pulpits. The church at Portland was established in 1866, as has been said. The dedication of the present church building in June, 1879, was the

occasion of the first gathering of Pacific Coast Unitarians. It was my privilege to accompany Dr. Stebbins on this delightful trip. We went by steamer, though if there was anything in the world that Dr. Stebbins did not love, it was ocean travel. I have a card of that date:

My dear Charles:

The *California*, the finest ship in the known world, will leave this part of said world on Tuesday the 27th. I feel about it as the woman in Connecticut did about the revival: "I dread her, but let her come!"

Yours really

H. Stebbins

He was miserably seasick on the way up, but stood the hard test and kept good-naturedly humorous, as he lay helpless in his berth. He enjoyed it when I read aloud and he was benefited by the complete escape from care and responsibility. When we passed up the beautiful Columbia River, he was very happy, like a large boy on a vacation, the life of every gathering we had. On Sunday he preached the dedication sermon, and on the two following days we organized the first Pacific Coast Conference. Ministers were somewhat scarce, but they were of good quality and we made the most of them. We spoke of Mr. Stebbins and Mr. Eliot in those far-away days, but they were the same men who later honored their degrees. The Reverend

David Utter came down from Olympia on Puget Sound, and the Reverend Edward Galvin from Walla Walla. The Reverend W. W. McKaig, an emerging Presbyterian minister from Marysville, was a decided addition.

When off duty Dr. Stebbins was more hilarious than I had ever known him to be, or ever afterward saw him. One day as we strolled along the street he was walking with Mr. McKaig, a man almost his size. Suddenly he stopped and faced his companion, saying: "McKaig, I believe I'm a better man than you are. Come on, take off your coat and let's settle it." It was the height of the incongruous and convulsed the ministerial crowd. At the dedication and the Conference, Dr. Stebbins was at his best. He was particularly fond of Eliot and pleased to see the hold he had gained on the Portland community. It was as happy a convocation of good men as I ever knew, and Dr. Stebbins returned to his arduous duties greatly refreshed.

The Sunday School, organized in 1853, had grown steadily but slowly, until it shared in the rapid expansion of Starr King's time. When I joined it in 1864, the average attendance was about four hundred, and it was vigorous and efficient. When Dr. Stebbins succeeded Starr King, I was a teacher in the Sunday School, and when in 1869 Mr. J. C. A. Hill became superintendent, I was his assistant for four years, and upon his return to New England in 1873 I became

superintendent, serving most of the time during the long ministry of Dr. Stebbins. The entertainments of the Sunday School were popular, and the public enjoyed them in a unique degree. Our Christmas festivals were a feature of the city life. Platt's Hall would be well filled, with an admission fee of a large silver dollar, and after the dinner for pupils, service for the school, Christmas tree and entertainment, an enjoyable dance followed. Something attractively fresh was always expected and generally realized. A surprise snowstorm is a memory of many early members. Equally popular were the picnics, which usually alternated between Belmont and Fairfax. The attendance often numbered a thousand and the whole community looked forward to them. Perhaps, however, our anniversaries were the most distinctive and memorable events of Sunday-School life. On the Sunday nearest to the 7th of August the Sunday School usually marched behind its banner to the center and front of the church and conducted the morning services, which included the year's report, an address by Dr. Stebbins, and, best remembered of all, the presentation of a souvenir bouquet from an immense floral pyramid as each scholar passed before Dr. Stebbins after the benediction. Year after year this happy custom was followed, and his gracious presence as he bestowed the simple tokens of his affection was impressed on thousands of little ones, who still reverence him.

When Dr. Stebbins came to us, the era of organizations inside the church had not arrived. In 1871 the Unitarian Socials were organized, with officers and committees charged with promoting the social interests of the church. Musical and literary entertainments were given in the church parlors, but they were too formal to provoke real sociability. In 1873 we turned to a rather elaborate organization for general usefulness, the Society for Christian Work, to which both men and women belonged. One section carried on the benevolent activities that had never been neglected; the second established and maintained a successful sewing school for which as many as four hundred pupils met weekly; the third section distributed reading matter to hospitals and jails; and the fourth kept up social gatherings and tried to promote better acquaintance among church attendants. It did good work for several years. Section One had use for more money than it could easily secure, and sometimes extraordinary efforts were necessary. In 1877, when the Kellogg Opera Company was having a good season, the contralto singer, Annie Louise Cary, who had known and loved Dr. Stebbins in Portland and wished to help, gave a really sacred concert in the church on a Sunday evening. She had a capacity house, and, supported by the Loring Club and others, presented a fine programme, the best number of which was her solo "O, Rest in the Lord." Standing in the pulpit, with reverent manner, she seemed a dovelike

embodiment of purity and love. The benefit added over a thousand dollars to the treasury. By 1880 a few determined women reorganized the society, keeping the same name, but confining it to the duties of Section One. In 1887 a second Woman's Society was organized under the name of the Channing Auxiliary. Its interest is educational and denominational; it conducts a Post Office Mission and occasionally indulges in publication. This society became affiliated later with the Alliance of Unitarian Women, a National Society, of which for years it was the largest branch, as, indeed, it still may be.

Dr. Stebbins was sparing in the matter of vacations. He never closed the church for more than a month in the summer, and for most of the time he conducted a morning and an evening service. He did not always leave the city for his brief annual rest. He liked his own home too well to risk discomforts. He generally enjoyed good health, but in 1882 he had an attack of pneumonia, which left him reduced in vitality, and he was advised to spend a time at Sisson's meadows, near Shasta. In September he writes:

"My coming here has been a great benefit, and I am feeling the returning tides of health and strength. I want to stay only long enough to 'catch the slack' and thus make fast what I have gained. I rode in the saddle on a mountain trail over twenty miles on Saturday. The days are singularly fine, and there is a peculiar luxury in the air. I am making the most

of it, as I breathe it, flavored with the love of my friends."

He was most generous in expressions of affection. In September, 1884, on a journey to the East, he wrote from Portland, Maine:

"My dear Charles: I want only to *speak* to you; it matters not much what I say. My journey at all its stages has been pleasant, and the days have gone gently on into a deeper splendor, typical of my own feelings whenever I come into these fields of former memories. The occasion at Saratoga was very interesting, and my part in it was all that your love could wish; which surely seems egotism in me to say, did I not say it from your heart more than from my own. Dear Charles, my affection for you is very great, and I am instructed by you in my spirit. I shall see you again soon."

In 1888 he again returned from the East by way of Portland, Oregon, whence he writes:

"My dear Friend: I have about completed the circle of my travels, and am satisfied with the purpose and end of my journey. I have been met everywhere with cordiality, and, strange to me, with an acknowledgment of reputation of which I did not dream. I hope I shall be saved from any vanity. I have nothing to write, unless it is to tell you of my admiring regard and manly love. Is that nothing? It is a good deal to me!"

He had the habit of dropping in frequently at my

place of business just to say a friendly word. One day I returned from a brief absence and found on a scrap of paper his familiar bold signature, followed by one word and three exclamation points: "Nothing!!!"

Dr. Stebbins enjoyed his trips to the East whenever opportunity offered. It was a pleasure to meet old friends and renew early associations. In 1883 he wrote me from Matunuck Beach, Rhode Island:

My dear Charles:

I am truly refreshed by your cordial remembrance and your kind words. The fact is, I am one of the most susceptible creatures in the world: fond even to dependence, on the regards of others, yet with resource and self-reliance that seem to contradict it. I came down here on Tuesday to meet Hale and have a little quiet seclusion with him. I have enjoyed a great deal. I leave this afternoon to go to Springfield, where I shall meet a few friends of early days, and feel the absence of those who are gone. I am much refreshed by my journey. The soft green landscape, the running waters, the cool shade, all sink into my very spirit. The memories of former times and persons are keen and vivid, but I would not avoid the pain they bring. How happily shall I return to my work! I hope I shall be able to do more and better than ever before. I am much interested in all you are doing for the Boys and Girls Society. You are surely a most happy man in such ability for works of goodness and

love. I have often thought of you with gratitude and joy. Give my love to your wife. I cherish her regard for me as one of the precious things of life. With love to you both, H. STEBBINS

On the twentieth anniversary of Dr. Stebbins's settlement the congregation testified to their affection by presenting to him, on the Sunday evening nearest the actual date, an address on parchment, signed by all the people within reach. It read:

DEAR DR. STEBBINS: It is fitting upon this anniversary, marking an important era in our history and in yours, that we express our gratitude for these years of happy association, and our sincere affection and respectful regard for you. The text from which you first preached to us, twenty years ago to-day, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister," was prophetic. You have indeed been our minister; sustaining us in trouble, comforting us in sickness, teaching us by word and example, and holding ever before us the highest ideals of moral and spiritual life. You have been patient with us in our indifference, and devoted to us far beyond our deserving. Nor has your service been confined to us. You have ministered with tender sympathy to the poor and the pastorless, and helped to better living and nobler aspirations many not of your household of faith. You have been able to do much for the cause of good learning in the commu-

nity, and holding alone this western outpost of Unitarianism, you have added to the respect in which our liberal faith is held, and augmented its influence and power. We know that you are not dependent upon our appreciation, but we trust it will gratify you to feel that we are not unmindful of the service which, during these twenty years of unremitting labor, you have rendered us and the community of which we are a part. May the kind Providence that has so favored us continue to bless us in your presence and ministrations, and may we be enabled to express to you by willing service our sense of personal obligation, and to show in our lives the fruits of your teaching. May you be ever sustained by the deep and lofty faith which you have revealed to us, and may the peace that follows all true service and the love that passeth all understanding rest upon and enfold you always.

Dr. Stebbins always enjoyed the social side of a conference. He liked his associates, and gave them all a chance to do their best. It was a real opportunity to compare experiences and convictions, and advance interest in things of the spirit. He was always ready to do his full part, but never monopolized a session, or left as soon as he had finished, as if indifferent to what others might say. He had a pithy way of summing up discussion and flashing light on dark places, and he never spoke without saying something. He was more than able; he was wise, patient, and good-

natured. He was a large part of the first Conference at Portland, and he planned the second several years later, held at the Geary and Stockton Church, where Bartlett, Howison, Rabbi Cohn, and others supplemented the Unitarian clergy and made a really great meeting. He attended every session thereafter. I recall one at Oakland when participants were few, which did not, however, suffer in interest. The meetings were particularly brilliant, and at the closing session Dr. Stebbins said it reminded him of an experience early in life, when, standing on the shores of a lake, he saw the boat of a fisherman friend coming in. In answer to a query as to the catch, the friend stood in the boat and held up a large fish — which he dropped into the boat. Then he held up and dropped another, and another, and so on, until his catch was the envy of all. The truth was that he had simply manipulated one fish. The few at the Conference had been so busy that they had given the impression of large numbers.

Dr. Stebbins was never disposed to unsettle those whose religious convictions or theological opinions differed from his own. He encouraged no one to come to us with large expectations, or to hasten out of orthodoxy until he felt that he must. He deplored the loss that often resulted when the old faith was given up before the new was firmly established, and the misconception on the part of the unripe as to what it means to be a liberal. On his return from a trip to Oregon, he remarked that he found men whose only

idea of liberalism was that it allowed a man to shoot ducks on Sunday.

Some of the ministers who turned from the old churches and essayed to preach in ours shocked him with their lack of reverence and their revulsion from all that was spiritual. He said of one who seemed to glory in his escape from orthodoxy and spoke with contempt of his old faith: "He seems to have come out from his old church, naked, leaving all his clothes behind him."

For many years the sessions of the National Conference, now the General Conference, were held at Saratoga. At the eleventh meeting, held in 1884, Dr. Stebbins preached the biennial sermon — an important assignment. It was later published in pamphlet form.

The published sermons of Horatio Stebbins are few in number. He was always disinclined to print. In reply to a request for permission to publish a sermon, he once wrote me: "About this printing! I am wrong, perhaps, but experience has confirmed my feeling and I find that first-rate men in the profession agree with me. I will, however, sometime give you something to print. The secretary of the American Unitarian Association wanted material for a volume of sermons, but I have not agreed at present." While he shrank from printing sermons, he was always cordially anxious to contribute in any way possible to the value of the *Pacific Unitarian*, and often gave me short extracts.

In 1885 Dr. Stebbins was touched by the receipt of

resolutions and photographs from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. In the previous year, during a strike, one of their number, Engineer Clarke, had gone to his death in the pursuit of duty. Dr. Stebbins, in a sermon on "The Industrial Troubles of the Times," alluded with grateful appreciation to this notable act of heroism. A fund had been raised for a memorial, and a fitting monument erected to Clarke at the spot where he died in honor. During the unveiling the thoughts of the committee reverted to the admiring allusion of Dr. Stebbins, and they passed resolutions of gratitude for his words, "words that sustained many a brave heart in the discharge of his duty," and sent with them photographs of the monument and its unveiling.

In 1886, largely through Dr. Stebbins's interest and effort, the Unitarian Club of California was organized. For thirty years it was a strong, helpful agency, large and generous in membership, which held a place in the community all its own. It was acknowledged to offer the best of audiences, and when distinguished visitors came to the Coast its hospitality was gladly accepted. When Lyman Abbott visited San Francisco, Dr. McLean, the head of the Congregationalists, asked the privilege of introducing the club to him. Many Unitarian leaders have been entertained at its hospitable board. Dr. Stebbins was held in great veneration, and was usually urged to conclude the programme, whoever had spoken. One of the most notable dinners was

a reception to Susan B. Anthony and Anna Howard Shaw, at which Dr. Stebbins spoke to the toast: "Womanly Women." The largest and most impressive reception was given to Booker T. Washington.

In 1887 Dr. Stebbins was one of the guests of the Chit-Chat Club at its thirteenth annual meeting, as was General O. O. Howard, to whom was assigned the toast: "The Prospect of Universal Peace." He spoke hopefully, quoting General Sheridan to the effect that by extraordinary improvements in breech-loading ordnance war would soon become too costly in life and money to admit it as a solution of national troubles. He also referred to the love of peace exhibited by Grant and other soldiers, and to the effort of English and American statesmen to secure an International Congress. He felt sure there was an increasing majority of peace-loving men, and further that missionary enterprise was convincing the semi-civilized and uncivilized that their best interests were found in the divine teachings of him who came to proclaim peace on earth.

The second regular toast was "War," assigned to Dr. Stebbins. After a cordial introduction he said: "I know not by what design I have been set over against the distinguished captain. Let it not be supposed that I have any contention with him in the hopeful sentiments which he has expressed. I share those sentiments with him in company with the illustrious prophets and teachers of mankind, who, in inspired

vision of the advancing God, have seen the time when war shall be no more. We shall not live to see that time, though there be those here who shall not see death till they see the dawn of that day. Not to hope it, and trustingly believe it, is to belie those aspirations of the heart of man which the Maker has kindled, not to tantalize the world, but to lead mankind on to the realization of the poet's insight, more profound than politico-economics, or any doctrine of the balance of power, when

> 'all men to be
> Will make one people ere man's race be run.'"

He continued, however, with reflections on the ground and standing of war in the providence of the world, and concluded with the assurance that there is something worse than war, namely, the misery of having nothing worth fighting for.

Horatio Stebbins used his mind fearlessly and calmly, with no prejudices to be overcome. His thought was analytic and penetrating, and he followed it to ultimate conclusions. He remarked once that intellectual honesty was far more rare than moral honesty. His massive integrity had great distrust for half-truths, and the faculty of grasping essentials at once. He had great facility for generalization, and never mistook the corollary for the proposition.

Often during the discussion of a subject, before a club meeting, for instance, he would sit apparently unimpressed, absorbed in thought, and if called on at

the close, as he often was, he would, in a few brief words, state the question clearly, and dispose of it to the satisfaction of the company, perhaps bringing up some decisive factor not before considered. His discrimination and sense of perspective were remarkable, as also the beauty and finish of form with which he clothed extemporaneous remarks. His speech was always deliberate and rhythmical, often poetic. When unexpectedly called to say a few words in the way of benediction, he expressed his thoughts in beauty that was seldom less than majestic.

Dr. Stebbins was never more impressive than at the communion service, which he wholly divested of the quality of formal observance. It was real and tender, a communion of the inmost spirit, in which there was a sense of vital union and joyful solemnity. He frequently carried forward the theme of the sermon in the preceding church service, applying its central thought to life and connecting it with the unity of sympathy which a communion service typifies. He rarely followed any prescribed form of responses or prayer, but spoke from the depths of his own feeling, and led his flock in reverent supplication. At such times he was transfigured before us, lifted up into the heights of being. His countenance glowed with supernal beauty, and those to whom he ministered felt with him the divine presence, and were strengthened in their purpose to be led by the spirit. The service, to him, filled a real want, and was not a tradi-

tional observance of doctrinal implication, but a natural and blessed opportunity to draw near to one another and to God, in spirit and in truth, that love might find increase and strength be gained for loftier life.

Of all the many trips I enjoyed with Dr. Stebbins, attendance at the Boston May Meetings of 1886 holds first place. From first to last it was a delightful experience. He was in good spirits on the train and enjoyed meeting all sorts of men. I would find him animatedly discussing cattle with a man from Montana, or lumber with an Oregonian. He was thoroughly democratic and sympathetic, friends with all, even with the jocose Pullman porter, whose final injunction was: "Be good." He was easily amused. During a brief stop at a station called Green River — a desolate place, where there was nothing green in sight excepting the word on the station sign — he engaged in conversation a native on the platform and casually asked him if it were not rather lonely in the winter. "Well," replied the man, "in the winter we play cards a good deal, to mitigate the gloom." "Mitigate the gloom" appealed to Dr. Stebbins as an expressive phrase, and he never forgot it. It is still a family expression. He was unwearied by the long journey and reached Boston with keen anticipation of the companionship he missed in his distant field of labor. He was heartily welcomed and enjoyed much in the remarkable meetings of the week. He spoke at the large evening meeting, where

he met Dr. Hedge and Dr. Peabody, whom he greatly esteemed.

At the laymen's festival he replied for the ministry, and was very happy. He told an incident of his early experience in San Francisco that convulsed the company. He had entered one of the street-cars of the period, with plush-covered seats, and straw on the floor. It was well filled, but he finally found an unoccupied space by the side of a good-natured man who made room. He noticed that the accommodating stranger had obviously been imbibing rather freely, also that he, himself, was recognized. The man turned toward him and familiarly patting the doctor's knee said: "I know who you are. You're Dr. Stebbins, and you're a good man, but I don't go a cent on your religion. I'm a Baptist myself." "The laugh was on me," Dr. Stebbins continued, "but by a happy chance I turned it off with the reply: 'I am glad to know you are a Baptist; cold water is just what you need.'"

The ordination of his son Roderick at Milton occurred during our stay. He gave the charge to the minister, and it was one of the best addresses I ever heard, full of wisdom, tenderness, and feeling, seasoned by a touch of homely humor. A sentence or two may find place here:

"My notion is that the prime credential for the vocation of a minister is a generous love of human nature — a conviction, glowing with enthusiasm, that human nature is the best thing God has ever made, as

far as we know. The strong citadel of a minister's mind, amid indifference around him and the consciousness of the inadequacy of his own work, is that in every man's inmost soul he has an advocate with the Father, that says amen to all eternal truth; and that, while his own imperfect work partakes of the imperfection of all human things, yet the work of God shall prosper."

It was a beautiful sight to view the silver-headed saints, lifelong friends of the returned exile, as he stood in grateful pride by the side of the son who had chosen the profession he honored and loved.

On June 19, 1887, we worshiped for the last time in the Starr King Church, which was to be torn down to make way for a business block. The churches in Oakland and Sacramento united with us in the farewell service. In his announcement the previous Sunday, Dr. Stebbins had said: "Let us all, young and old, gather here once more, and offer gratitude and praise to the Giver of all good, and the Guide of man. Then let us go out with reverent and strong adieux where the Eternal Providence shall lead." To this announcement he added the following suggestion: "Let each one of us as we come in lay a green leaf, a flower, a spire of grass on the burial stone that lies yonder. Let there be no wreaths or artificial labors, but a sprig of the beauty of the world, such as a child can pluck with his hand, or that a dove let loose from heaven might bring to adorn the brow of a Son of Man."

The service was carried out in the spirit of his words.

We had worshiped in this church for over twenty-three years, but it was time to leave the business district. We sold for one hundred and twenty thousand dollars the lot that had cost sixteen thousand dollars, and built, at the corner of Franklin Street, a fine building that cost, lot and all, ninety-one thousand dollars. Dr. Stebbins took great interest in this new church, and on February 19, 1889, it was dedicated. Dr. Hedge wrote a hymn for the occasion. During its construction we worshiped in the Synagogue Emanuel, and the Sunday School was hospitably entertained at the First Congregational Church, which indicates the friendly relations maintained by Dr. Stebbins, who never engaged in controversy with any other household of faith.

When Dr. Stebbins came to the church he found as its treasurer, and a trustee, Captain William C. Hinckley who had been its devoted friend for many years. He lived on Bush Street, and was thus a near neighbor as well as a constant attendant at church. As he drew near his end, he was pathetically dependent on his dearly loved minister. His wife had gone before; he was childless and lonely. Dr. Stebbins was tenderly devoted, cheering and sustaining him to the last. Captain Hinckley wanted to dispose of his property so that it would do the greatest possible good after he was gone. He asked Dr. Stebbins to draw up his will, who complied after much thought and con-

sultation. On December 29, 1875, the will establishing "The William and Alice Hinckley Trust" was signed. Captain Hinckley died April 11, 1876. Let Dr. Stebbins tell his story. On the Sunday following he said, in part:

"Captain William Crawford Hinckley and his wife, Alice Campbell Hinckley, were members of our parish and cheerful helpers of our cause from the early days. They were the cordial friends of my predecessor, Mr. King, and he enjoyed, as only such as he can enjoy, the simplicity of their manners and their true kindness. They could not love me as they loved him, but they loved me after a true fashion, which gave them much delight and me much cause of gratitude." After telling of Captain Hinckley's birth in Boston in 1809, of his boyhood in Milton, of his apprenticeship to the dry-goods trade at thirteen, of his finding that there was "no trade in him," and of his shipping on a whaler at the age of sixteen, returning three years later with ninety dollars and experience, of several years in the merchant service, of his determination, at twenty-one, to get more schooling, of his return to Milton and study at the academy for three months, Dr. Stebbins proceeds:

"There the sailor-boy, returning from throwing the harpoon along the Pacific longitude, encountered the javelin that pierced his heart from Alice Hinckley's eyes. Then a new inspiration took him. He must do something — and what could he do? He was 'good for

nothing else'—the sea was his field. He went, rose quickly to be master,—and he was a good one,—roved from sea to sea and from shore to shore with varying fortunes, sometimes up and sometimes down, but generally down. He was accustomed to say, with honorable simplicity: 'The truth is, I never was a business man.' He was off the coast of South America when he heard of the gold discoveries in California. He took his ship up the river among the first, and her bones lie there now. He went to the mines. As he said, he 'got the hang of mining,' and in a few months took out nearly six thousand dollars, and came back to the Bay; and in those shifting times and events he bought at auction for sixty dollars the land on which the California Theater long stood. Nobody outbid him, and some thought he was a fool for buying it. He never displayed any conceit about it after it turned out to be successful far beyond his foresight. He always said it was a good Providence that gave him a competence in his increasing years. He was so impressed with the idea that his later prosperity was owing to no special wit or talent of his own, that he wanted to set apart a portion of his property as a memorial of the good Providence that had befriended him. I have never seen a man who understood more clearly or confessed more humbly that causes entirely beyond his control and greater than his wisdom had given him success. He knew that he came in on the tide and never claimed that he rowed in or steamed in.

After the death of Mrs. Hinckley, his frame gave way, though he lived in much enjoyment, occupied chiefly in making all things ready for his departure. Ten days before his death it was manifest that he was sinking rapidly. At evening, holding my hand in his, he said, 'I am glad to see you; it does me good!' In the morning, before day, when the tide served, he lifted his anchors and put out upon the boundless blue."

The lot on Bush Street, near Kearney, bought for sixty dollars, had been leased to the California Theater Company for one thousand dollars a month, ground rental, and he had some other property. Under the will the then trustees of the church were made executors, and also trustees of the trust fund. From the income of the lease a number of legacies and a mortgage were slowly met. The will was contested as constituting a perpetuity. Litigation postponed settlement, but finally the will was sustained and the trust fund, to the extent of one third of the estate, set aside. It was March, 1890, when disbursements of the interest of the fund of fifty-two thousand dollars began. The will gave great discretion to the trustees under the general provision, "for Human Beneficence," particularly commending religion, learning, and charity. It called attention to the trials and afflictions of the industrious, striving, unfortunate poor and especially to the aged, the infirm, and the lonely. It also provided a Hinckley Scholarship of three hundred dollars a

year. Dr. Stebbins was elected president of the board, and held the position till his removal to New England in 1900.

This fund has been of incalculable benefit and is a source of great strength to the church. Its income provides an appropriation of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month to the Society for Christian Work for the charities of the church, and as much more for other expenditures. Up to this time we have disbursed more than seventy-two thousand dollars and the fund has increased to sixty-two thousand dollars. Dr. Stebbins was strong in his belief that individuals should be endowed rather than institutions, and this Will, in providing that vacancies be filled by joint ballot of the trustees and the board of church trustees, insures perpetual beneficence administered by a group of interested individuals. Only one of the original trustees survives, but the spirit of the trust is unquenched and seemingly immortal.

Incidentally the case has significant importance, as it established the American law on perpetuities, finding that such a perpetuity for human good is not to be interdicted (as by the English law), as against public interest.

Dr. Stebbins inspired the utmost respect among the men of the parish, and they responded to his spirit and were anxious to serve others. Among those who felt this fine friendliness was Mr. Henry Pierce, a man of apparently little sentiment. He was frequently a

dinner guest, and delighted to take with him any of the family when he exercised his fine team of horses. When he died, his will contained an unexpected clause: "I give and bequeath to my three friends, Horatio Stebbins, Horace Davis, and Charles A. Murdock, and to their successors, the sum of ten thousand dollars in trust for the library of the First Unitarian Church." There was no existing library, save that of the Sunday School, and the surviving trustees decided that the income of the fund should be spent, after providing for the wants of the Church School, in establishing a library, to be called "The Henry Pierce Library," which should provide, for the parish and for ministers, students, and others, of all denominations, the best publications on religion and kindred topics. It is located at the church, and provides even to ministers at a distance books they would find it difficult, if not impossible, otherwise to obtain. It has increasing appreciation from the parish. At the death of the surviving trustee, it will be controlled by the church trustees, one more monument to the memory and influence of Horatio Stebbins.

Another parishioner, Mrs. Anna M. Hathaway, established at her death a trust fund of five thousand dollars for the poor of the church. Dr. Stebbins served as a trustee during his lifetime. These two funds augment the beneficence that promises to testify for all time to the helpful influence of his ministry.

Two parishioners who loved him much, William and

Caroline Hardy, provided by will for some memorial of him to be placed in the walls of the church, and in 1917 a simple tablet of bronze was dedicated. A similar tablet is placed near it in memory of Starr King.

A touching tribute of grateful affection in the form of a mural painting adorns the Gothic panel back of the pulpit. It is the work and gift of Mr. Bruce Porter, who grew to manhood under Dr. Stebbins's preaching, and greatly revered him. It represents the religious development of mankind, particularly the significance of a favorite phrase of Dr. Stebbins, "Lo, at length, the True Light." Mr. Porter was variously gifted, and a beautiful poem written by him in 1898 may well appear here:

HORATIO STEBBINS

Honored by humble men, he walks these streets,
Priest of the wider parish of the heart;
A tower of strength to the impetuous State,
Where steadfast and serene he fills his part;
Still offering wisdom — though the hour grows late;
Still lending courage — in the face of Fate.
Unterrified and kind, large as the light of day,
He passes on —
We lift our eyes, sodden with petty ills,
And lo! — visions of forests, of the silent hills,
And the deep tides of the obedient sea!

Without doubt the friend upon whom Dr. Stebbins most relied for sympathy and support was Horace Davis, who for nearly forty years conducted the Bible-Class in the Sunday School. He was thoroughly con-

genial and by character and attainment more nearly an equal than any other parishioner. He delighted in Dr. Stebbins, and their intimacy was a great resource to both. He was an appreciative friend. In an historical sketch of the church, after referring to Dr. Stebbins's valued public services, he said: "Dr. Stebbins's greatest power was in the pulpit; and his preaching was always to the individual, to you and me. Each of us remembers some peculiar phase of his preaching, but he impressed me most when he spoke of the eternal verities of the spirit. God and the human soul were realities to him, more real than the rocks and hills around us. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to him — a debt greater than I owe to any other man, greater than any service of mine can pay."

CHAPTER VI

CLOSE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MINISTRY

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coming of Dr. Stebbins, his congregation turned out in full numbers to mark the event. The parlors had been tastefully decorated with flowers and ferns by the loving hands of the ladies of the church societies. Delightful music formed a background for congratulations and brisk conversation during a happy evening. Then the moderator, Mr. Charles M. Gorham, signaled silence and addressed Dr. Stebbins:

"Years ago you came to the pastorate of this church. During all these years you have given us the best that God has given you, and, while you have faithfully ministered to this congregation, you have also taken the whole city for your field of duty — going about doing good, helping the needy, encouraging the weak, comforting the distressed; and so, moved by feelings of grateful appreciation and affectionate regard, we herewith present you something material by way of remembrance, with the hope that you may be long spared to your family, to us, your people, and to the church of God."

The "herewith" was a purse containing $1864, and accompanied the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Dr. Stebbins replied with tender emotion.

He was "surprised, delighted, and happy." It was he who was under debt to his people, and, "if my teachings have cast warmth upon your hearts," he said, "it is from inspiration I have gained through the grace of God. If I have entered into service with the love of human nature, it is from the womanly influence which is ever near me. I owe this to the woman who is my wife and whom I have the honor to love." He closed by bestowing his blessing on the gathering

Dr. Stebbins was well sustained by his people, but he stood practically alone on the Pacific Coast; for even when he could rejoice in Eliot in Portland or Fay in Los Angeles, distances were so great that he had little companionship. So we were always glad when he was able to go to conferences in the East and meet his brother ministers. It had value for them as well. It stimulated the young to see and hear him. The Reverend Richard W. Boynton wrote in 1909 to the *Christian Register:*

"I well recall, at my first National Conference at Saratoga in 1891, when on my twenty-first birthday I consecrated myself to this ministry, the magnificent presence of Dr. Stebbins of San Francisco, and the spirit of what he said. He closed in this way, 'I have always spoken and preached from the level of my mind; and, by the grace of God, I am able to say, with all humility and yet with pride, that those who have gone from the First Church of San Francisco have gone inoculated at least with truth that preserves

them from the miserable religious diseases of Christendom.'"

Again Mr. Boynton wrote:

"Study the preaching of the great preachers, of George Putnam, of Phillips Brooks, of Horatio Stebbins, of Brooke Herford, of James Martineau, and you will find that it did not concern itself with the uprooting of particular wrong so much as with the affirming and establishing of universal truth and right. It went out of doors, it glorified in the broad sweep of truth, it spoke with the voices of authority, it made men whole, and then trusted those whole men to make a wholesome world."

The thirtieth anniversary was marked by the installation of the Reverend William G. Eliot, Jr., as assistant minister of the church. To join in the auspicious event Dr. Thomas L. Eliot, father of the new minister, had come from Portland, Oregon, and the Reverend Roderick Stebbins, his close friend, had come from Milton, Massachusetts. The Reverend Charles W. Wendte preached the sermon, Dr. Eliot gave the charge, the Reverend Roderick Stebbins the right hand of fellowship. Dr. Stebbins gave a noble address in the course of which he said:

"Dear Friends: The purpose that gives importance and emphasis to this occasion is concluded. The day has indeed a double import to our memory and our hope. We may reverently recognize the providence of

God in history, when we call to mind that this is the anniversary of the admission of California to the Union — one of the most striking events, considering all its attendant circumstances, of the last half-century. We may reverently confess that Providence in human affairs, under whose guidance men are sometimes wiser than they know, and which brought this western shore under the protecting ægis of the Constitution, within whose folds there lie those latent principles of justice and truth that are yet to be revealed for the guidance and welfare of mankind; else, we had been a feeble republic, looking with vacant gaze upon a lazy, idle sea, facing Oriental monotony, the sullen pyramids, and the drowsy Sphinx.

"We may call to mind with a reverent gratitude that this historic event in the life of our country was contemporaneous with the founding of our church, and that here political liberty and rational religion, the eternal signals of human progress, were established together by men who brought with them something of the continuity of history, and the traditions of an advancing race. We may cherish with cheerful humility and honorable self-respect, under God, the feeling that our church has been the source of much good, and has done something, not only for the spiritual life and growth of those who have sustained its cause and shared its ministrations, but also for that general progress of religious thought from dogmatic assertion to reasonable conviction, which characterizes the

better mind of our day. We have had an honorable share in the interpretation of human life in the light of religion. For this, we reverently thank God, whose inspiration giveth us understanding.

"This date is the thirtieth anniversary of my coming as your minister. That period of thirty years includes more than half the period of the American occupation of the country, and of the life of our church. I would give it no personal accent or importance. When I came, Bellows was here; a distinguished figure and remarkable man of his time, who, most susceptible to impression, was more eloquent than Kossuth, more witty than Sydney Smith, and devout as Augustine. The beloved King had died six months before; the air was fragrant with his name, and the vanishing echoes of his voice for God and Country were still heard. The fires of war cast their lurid glare from shore to shore, and grief and victory wept for the sorrows of the land.

"But let me not dwell upon the past, much less speak of myself. There is no necessity that a man should speak of himself among those who know him better than he knows himself, only bear with me a little if I boast of your friendship, and am proud of your fidelity. I can ask nothing better for this young man than that you receive him, as you have me, with magnanimous moral and spiritual hospitality. Respect will grow to admiration and love, and he will be to you what he is already to his friends — strength, confidence, and satisfaction.

"Young man, I bid you hail! As you stand upon the threshold of the future, and go forward to the work that Heaven ordains, we who are passing salute you, and the coming race takes up the theme!"

For the thirty-first anniversary the ladies of the congregation had planned a pleasant acknowledgment in the form of a portrait in oil to be presented to the church. Although Dr. Stebbins usually enjoyed good health, he had then an attack of weakness that prevented him from preaching the sermon he had prepared, but he was able to respond to the words of the moderator and clerk. A large number were present, and at the close of the services pressed around Dr. Stebbins to express their regard. He was much touched by their sympathy and loyalty. Subsequently he preached what he called a secular discourse, and it was published by the Channing Auxiliary. It gives an estimate of the results of the past thirty-one years.

He spoke first of the material progress of the State and the fact that, in spite of the spirit naturally engendered by the gold discoveries, there had been established a commonwealth that promised to rank high in world states by its institutions of law, learning, and religion. He noted signs of increasing industry and economy, alluded prophetically to the dangers involved in wine and liquor production,

declared that the theory of the minimum of business at the maximum of profit must give way to the theory of the maximum of business at the minimum of profit, and showed that the tide of population would come when people knew that the land would yield competence and comfort to small owners of good habits and little money. He spoke of California's inevitable relation to the Asiatic races in the opening of the Orient and her responsibility therein. He analyzed tendencies of society and of the public press and found the remedy for ills and wrong in the education that in the large sense includes development of the intellectual and moral nature of man, and relies on the evolution of the individual for the renovation of society. He concluded with a statement that embodied his mature conceptions of religion; and closed with the thought that a teacher of religion is the interpreter of human life in its true relations. He closed with the words: "How feebly I have filled this ideal in these years of the lifetime of a generation, I know and God knows; but in no folly of self-adulation, in deep and tender humility, this has been my aim; and my honor and respect for you are that you have sustained me in it, by your steadfast hearts and by your vision on the mount. I am and have been among you a much employed man. I have not withheld my hand or my heart as a minister, a man, or a citizen from any human interest, within the reach of limited capacity and prescribed duty; and my proud humility and gratitude

are, under God, that men and women from every condition and circumstance of life have come to me simply because they thought I was human. If life and strength are given, I may render you better service yet, the riper fruits of experience, some clearer vision of God."

In April, 1895, occurred the ninetieth birthday of Martineau, and among the words of greeting to him Dr. Stebbins wrote:

"Reverend and dear Dr. Martineau: Indulge me, I pray you, for the sake of the satisfaction it gives my own heart, to convey to you my revering, grateful, and affectionate regards. If to be honored and beloved is the full cup of earthly joy, your joy is full. If to awaken the mind and heart of man to the deepest truth of his being is the purest and noblest service, you are among the great teachers of mankind. Among those who, in different lands, rejoice to see your day, I offer thanks to God that through you he has been revealed to many souls, and that in loving you they have loved him."

On August 23, 1896, Dr. Stebbins preached a noble sermon on "Manliness." It was in the nature of a farewell to his assistant, the Reverend William G. Eliot, Jr., who after two years of service went to Milwaukee to take charge of its pulpit. He said he would make no elaborate adieux to one "who goes out in

obedience to inward promptings to the open field of the world to cast the seed of truth on fresh furrows." He assured him of ardent wishes, and reminded him, and himself, of the office and duty of a minister, "to unfold the principles of moral and spiritual truth, to awaken the sentiments and affections of the heart, and lift up those ideals that ever draw the wondering eyes to the mountain-tops that lie between this and a hidden world."

In December, 1897, Dr. Stebbins wrote to Mr. Eli T. Sheppard, the essayist, who had read a paper at the Chit-Chat Club on "The Future of the Pacific"

"My dear Mr. Sheppard: I was sorry not to be present to hear you. All expected much, and I am assured that they were not disappointed. I do not know the precise view you took of the final part that shall be acted in the scene of History, on this now vacant sea. I am an Asiatic, and have always held the opinion that this western shore of the continent would wait the slow process of Oriental life, and depend for its full development on our relations with the Asiatic races. As our religion began in Asia, and took its westward way, so it will complete its circuit and finally touch the spot whence it arose. Great changes are going on, and a hundred years may witness China divided among the nations, or raised to equal rights among the 'most favored.' But let me not prophesy! I am content in the Faith that there is a providence in History."

Dr. Stebbins's attitude to Christian Science is set forth in a letter to Mr. Carol Norton, dated in 1898. He writes:

"My interest in Christian Science is drawn from observation and converse with devotees, rather than from careful studies. In conversation with intelligent disciples of this school, I have been led to the conclusion that the center of gravity of the theme is in the influence of mind over matter; or, put more humanely, *self-control* under the laws of moral rectitude and purity. Of course, the very gravamen of our religion, as expressed in thought or action, is just this, but I fail to discover anything new in it, either to saints or sinners, or to find in it a ground for that 'exact science' of which you speak. I cannot understand how a moral and spiritual world can be reduced to what is called demonstration. The glory of moral being is that what is apprehended is greater than the comprehended, and the demonstrable is the narrow border-land of the infinite. The guides of life, thought, and action, are judgments, probabilities, faith, and hopes. Abolish these by demonstration, and reduce the world to mathematics, the sun, moon, and stars would fall, and the bleak heavens would mark the hopeless world. There is in Christian Science an element of miraculism which contradicts our most elementary and fundamental idea of science as right knowledge: but the theme is too large for discussion here. I thank you sincerely for your cordiality, and assure you of my great respect."

In July, 1898, the Class of '48 of Harvard University, of which Dr. Stebbins was a member, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. He was unable to attend, but sent a letter, which has especial interest as expressing some general conclusions reached at the eminence of seventy-seven. He said:

"Of myself I will not speak, more than to say that I have been as happy as is common to human lot under a Divine Providence, and had as good success as a man like me can reasonably expect. I also confess with grateful humility that I have taken great satisfaction in my vocation, and, it may be, have rendered some service to my time and the welfare of my fellowmen. I am especially glad, too, that years find me good-natured, and that, amid all human vicissitude of ignorance, weakness, or wrong, I have a cheerful heart toward humankind, am a believer in the world, and an ardent lover of human nature as the best thing God has ever made. I am no sentimentalist, but a severe moralist, tempered by the genial charities of religion and cheered by a great hope."

On August 21, 1898, Dr. Stebbins felt moved to express his satisfaction at the public act of a foreign ambassador, then at Berlin. He sent this letter:

"Hon. Andrew D. White: I thank you heartily for your speech at Leipzig on the Fourth of July. It is distinguished for wisdom, discretion, and independence, united with that felicity of expression which

becomes the courtesy of nations. Your position has been of such delicacy that we, here at home, have felt a lively interest in your conduct, and it is a source of great and proud satisfaction, that our confidence has been abundantly justified. Your speech displays the qualities of a discreet politician, a wise statesman, and an independent champion of freedom. The touchy spirit of the German Emperor has, in some minds, excited evil forebodings; in others, derision. You have ignored these extremes, by the path of right reason, and the manners of a prince of liberty. That is a singular felicity of speech where you give our cause such historic setting: 'The struggle of a new era of right against an old era of wrong.' The war was inevitable; it is over: my only desire now is that diplomacy may be so wise and so honorable that statesmen may believe in one another in all national efforts to promote the welfare of humankind. Bismarck is dead! The heavens do not weep; nor is there a ripple of grief in the heart of man. A statesman so bereft of great human nature as to think of founding a modern state without principles of individual liberty does not attract the applause nor the gratitude of the world. I hope you are well and enjoying the well-earned reputation which your varied public service justifies."

Dr. Stebbins endeared himself to many in the community who were not identified with his church. His friendliness and his services were not confined within

any ecclesiastical or theological banks, and he was always ready to respond to any call or need. An ex-sea-captain of Episcopalian affiliations fell ill, and relapsed into invalidism. He was fond of Dr. Stebbins, and nothing seemed to brighten him like a call from the much-occupied preacher, who regularly and frequently dropped in to see him; and this habit continued as long as the Captain lived.

Added to Dr. Stebbins's generosity was entire independence and disinterestedness. He was faithful to his church, but he commanded community respect and confidence, and the strong men of business and leaders in public affairs believed in him and trusted him fully. They were ready to help him, and so he became practically influential, and able to help those who were out of employment. His opinion carried weight, and on any public matter his attitude had value.

It was a fortunate circumstance that the Unitarian Church in the controlling community of the State of California was represented continuously, by two men of the strength and character of Starr King and Horatio Stebbins. It gave it a standing and a respect not always accorded. No California Unitarian ever thinks of being apologetic for his faith. Neither has he any excuse for being a narrow and illiberal liberal. His traditions ought to be generous, without complacency or contempt. Dr. Stebbins never sought to build up his church by destroying any other. Neither

did he indulge in attacks or disparagement. At different times, as opportunity offered, he expressed sympathy and appreciation with many other forms of faith.

In 1900, Mr. Rolla V. Watt, a prominent and loyal Methodist, had publicly expressed his disappointment at the apathy and weakness of his church. Dr. Stebbins wrote him a considerate letter, recalling his early observations and his present regard for Methodism, and besought his friend to be patient, and not to forget the honorable record and continued excellence of a great church. He often showed his friendliness with the Roman Catholic Church, and had no sympathy with those who distrusted and feared it. He was generally on good terms with those from whom he widely differed. Generous and magnanimous by nature, he preserved a sense of perspective that did not distort the truth.

The discourses of Dr. Stebbins were thoroughly prepared. They were never long and rarely exceeded twenty minutes, but were often so packed with thought that they seemed to embrace enough material for at least two sermons. He was distrustful of the diffusiveness of extemporaneous speaking, though he was known on occasion to develop an introductory allusion to some current occurrence into a complete address, allowing his manuscript to remain unopened. His sermons were always constructive and affirmative,

never controversial. He was earnest, but never passionate. He was calm with the dignity of a strong man uttering deep convictions. His use of language was apt, and his illustrations were original and effective. He was an attractive speaker, but he demanded thoughtful hearing and to follow him was no easy task. He enjoyed his congregation, and it gained the credit of showing unusually quiet and absorbed attention. He wrote deliberately, taking all the time required to express himself clearly, often delaying a sentence to find the exact word to express his meaning. When the sermon was complete, it was beautiful in appearance, written in bold and striking characters, without interlineation or correction. In the Pacific School for the Ministry there have been deposited some eight hundred manuscripts of sermons, and hardly an amended sentence is to be found.

Dr. Stebbins usually enjoyed robust health, but along in 1897 and 1898 he had several serious warnings. On December 16, 1899, he felt oppressed, and unable to fill his pulpit. The next day he had a severe attack of apparent heart failure, and the end seemed near. Tuesday morning he was better, and full of courage but weak. He said to me: "Early this morning we had a storm center and I thought the end had come. My son held me up with strength like an angel's and here I am, at peace with the world and all mankind."

For ten days his life trembled in the balance, and then he steadily improved. The trustees felt that every possible relief must be given him, and, after supplies had filled the pulpit for January, they engaged the Reverend Stopford W. Brooke, of Boston, to supply for several months, until Dr. Stebbins was able to resume his ministry. On January 22 he felt constrained to resign — "that you may be free," he wrote, "to act according to the dictates of your discretion, and as the welfare of the church demands."

The resignation was read to the congregation and the trustees reported that there was no other thought than retaining the existing relation as long as he lived, and that it was fondly hoped he might soon be in his pulpit. The resignation was formally declined and the moderator was instructed to confer from time to time as to further action. His health steadily improved during the succeeding months. He saw his friends, walked about, and was full of courage and faith. Mr. Brooke served very acceptably for five months. Dr. Stebbins preached on June 11 and was able happily to round out thirty-five years of service with his anniversary service of September 11.

On that occasion the congregations of his church and of the Second Unitarian Church joined in commemorating the event. The services were held in the First Church, the Reverend Andrew J. Wells offering the prayer and reading the scriptures. Dr. Stebbins took

for his text the passage from Deuteronomy where Moses was commanded: "Get thee up into the top of the hill, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and behold with thine eyes." He made rapid survey of the half-century drawing to a close, and added:

"This church has stood for those great principles of freedom and independence in religious thought that must ever be the ally of reason and of faith. It churches or unchurches no man. It inquires not for the particular items of his belief, nor puts him on trial for his opinions, but simply organizes religion for the purpose of teaching, worship, and prayer, and the good works of honor, truth, and love.

"A minister should know the world without being worldly, understand the wickedness of the world without partaking its wickedness, though he himself is weak; sympathizing with men of all ranks and conditions, severely upright, yet tender-hearted. Beyond that there is not much that I believe I would tell anybody. I would talk with anybody, and supplement my own experience by his, and increase the breadth of my knowledge, and learn to know how little I know, yet standing firm as a rock in the eternal verities of moral and spiritual being.

"The prosperity of this church has been a kind of steady-going strength without proselytism or competition, relying simply on the moral and spiritual attractions of religious truth, interpreted by reverent faith,

imagination, reason, and common sense. The preacher has spoken from the level of his mind, and the people have heard with tolerant mind and receptive heart. There has been no trial for heresy and no meddling with private opinions, and the human sentiments of mutual sympathy and honor have been our bond of thought, feeling, and action. Religion is not a profession; it is human nature and life, the law and love of our being, as gravitation is in earth and star, and as light goes forth upon land and sea. We have only to lay hold upon that law and love within, and our being becomes real to us. We are satisfied that though life has many illusions life itself is no deception; that we ourselves are spiritual beings of kindred nature with God; and if these great sentiments sway our hearts, illume our reason, and inspire our action, we have, by the grace of God, vested rights and blessings in immortality."

The moderator of the church then stepped forward and asked him to accept a simple memorial of the regard of his parishioners, in the form of an engrossed address, bound in a convenient volume and signed by many friends. Slipped in was an envelope containing over four thousand dollars.

On September 26, Dr. Stebbins, feeling that his health was too precarious to justify him in longer continuance of service, asked to be definitely relieved. With reluctance the trustees granted his request and

elected him Pastor Emeritus; and the Reverend Bradford Leavitt, of Washington, D.C., was called as minister. Dr. Stebbins's health greatly improved and he was able to fill the pulpit frequently. In November he preached three times to the great satisfaction of all.

A letter to Mr. Eli Sheppard, written early in 1900, indicates his mental and physical condition:

"I am having a low-toned kind of health that admits some comfort, yet exacts some carefulness. Your speaking of me so kindly, and finding here and there a man who speaks so, impresses me much with sentiments of gratitude toward all. I feel that I have acted a very feeble part, yet I am not altogether without self-respect. As years increase, and the profounder experience of thought and life is awakened, I am impressed with how much there may be in every man that has not been called out or used. Abilities lie scattered all around loose that life has not fully appropriated. Your own health and your courage have always challenged my admiring sympathy, and I have held the hope that you might yet be delivered of all shipwreck and disaster, and have a free course of health and strength worthy your gifts. Whenever I have met you, I have felt toward you the happy obligations of an indebted mind. My work is done, though I will not lie down in the furrow, but will plod on with a slow but cheerful gait till the sun has set. My successor will be installed next Sunday morning. I trust that his cheerful confidence will be justified. I am

indeed glad that you have such a fine impression of the country as you have gone through different sections, here and there. I felt all your intelligent enthusiasm in regard to our wonderful land. I believe in it, mind, heart, and soul; and I believe there is to be a display of human power and greatness never surpassed on the earth. There is great noise among the nations, and we are living in a most eventful period. The world is growing smaller every year through the influence of swift communication, and nations are becoming neighborhoods, and the unity of mankind is dawning upon the world. While the life of a generation is short and sees little change, the eternal years move on under the guidance of Him with whom a thousand years is as one day, and one day is a thousand years. I thank you, indeed, for your great kindness. Believe me that it is heartily and sincerely reciprocated, and whether I see you again or not I bear upon my mind and heart the cheerful impression of your image."

On January 14, 1900, the Reverend Bradford Leavitt was installed. Dr. Stebbins was in fine spirits and made an excellent address. Then, turning to the people he besought them to receive his successor with the cordial hospitality of heart and mind, which they had ever shown toward him. "There has been in you," he said, "a cordial, sincere, and strong respect toward me which has given me the greatest personal satisfaction, and you have been very patient of my errors and

my blunders, with that good sense and upright judgment with which we all learn at length to take a man as he is, and not as he ought to be. This young man comes approved by all who know him. Treat him manfully, with confidence and trust, and thus challenge him to the noblest things there are in him, or that God can give."

A session of the Pacific Coast Conference was held at Berkeley on May 2 and 3, 1900. The general topic was "A Century of the Unitarian Movement in America." On the afternoon of the 2d, there were five five-minute papers or addresses on related topics. Dr. Stebbins was asked to speak on "The Contribution of the Unitarian Movement to Religious Thoughts and Ideas." When he was announced and stood up to speak, the entire body instinctively arose, to pay their respect to their devoted leader, whose early departure made it probable that he never would be with them again. He spoke briefly, but effectively, and was heard with the close attention he always received. Without a particle of boasting, he set forth with firm respect the influence of liberal teaching, and took occasion to deny the charge that our position was one of negation:

"There never was anything more false. It is an affirmation of the true nature of human nature and of retribution. It was a denial of Calvinism, that terrible system which controlled men through fear, and which could only be outgrown by the common sense of mankind. It is passing away; it is now substantially gone.

This having fallen to the ground, Unitarianism comes in as the common-sense view of religion. It is not a dogmatic creed, but a way of thinking, a habit of mind. God is not manifested merely in three persons, but in humanity." He alluded to the great contribution of the Reverend George R. Noyes. "He was a great lover of truth, and his studies are the track of light that has swept through our heavens for a hundred years. The destiny of our way of thinking is safe. A man who has character and moral courage follows his thought. We know the truth just in proportion in which we ourselves become the truth."

Dr. Stebbins stood in his San Francisco pulpit for the last time on May 27, 1900, four days before he was to leave for Milton, Massachusetts. Mr. Leavitt preached a brief sermon, Dr. Stebbins offering the prayer, and speaking impressive words of farewell. He said he had come to the church on this last Sunday because he wanted to join in the service of praise and prayer. As he had stood upon the corner and looked at the building, its stony face softened by the vines that caught the morning sun, it had seemed to typify the religion to whose service it was dedicated. It was strong and conscious of power; it spoke of rest and peace. Of his ministry he would not speak. If it had been helpful, if it had been able to do any good, it was because of the inspiring God, and it would be immortal. He had always entertained a respect for his people,

for their intelligence and faithfulness. He recognized Humanity as the greatest of churches, a communion that transcends all others. First of all, God had made him a man; and the inspiration to become a minister had come to him when, beneath the trees of his father's farm, he read the words of the greatest spirit of mankind. His ministry to this church had covered more than thirty-five years — a long period in the activity of a human life. If he had ever said anything to offend, he asked forgiveness; if he had been guilty of neglect, it had been without intent; if he had ever seemed to fail of sympathy in times of sorrow, he adjured them to believe it not. If he had a wish to express for the future of the church and its people, it was that they might continue to bear the name Unitarian. The best thought of all lands tends to converge in the acceptance of unity of natural law, unity of humanity, unity of God. In conclusion, he spoke of his gratitude for all he had enjoyed. He had always endeavored to speak to the reason, the faith, and the love of his hearers. Now he followed where the hand of Providence seemed to lead, and with gratitude, confidence, and trust he wished his congregation a cheerful, a grateful, and a happy good-morning. After the singing of a hymn he pronounced a tender benediction with a voice as strong and unfaltering as the noble heart it echoed.

The long, blessed ministry was at an end. Worn in body, but with mind unimpaired and spirit undaunted, he joined his children, calmly to await his earthly end.

CHAPTER VII

QUIET YEARS IN CAMBRIDGE

Dr. Stebbins continued in fair health, occasionally preaching and not unfrequently officiating at the funeral of some friend. In early May, 1900, he decided to return to New England, largely to be near his three children. He gave up his home on Larkin Street, associated with sacred memories, and on May 31 proceeded to Milton, Massachusetts. He sent to the July *Pacific Unitarian* a pleasant account of crossing the continent.

"Travel across the continent is now so frequent that nothing new can be said about it, and the scene awakens no surprise in the traveler himself. We took our places on the train at evening, gave pleasant adieu to friends, and were greeted on board by the faithful porter, who accosted me, calling me by name as if he knew me well, saying, 'Dr. Stebbins, if I can do anything for you, let me know. I'll be glad to do anything I can to elevate your comfort!'

"It is said that when men become travelers they grow selfish, and that it is a kind of every-one-for-himself, and the Devil take the hindmost. I think, however, that that saying is modified by the spirit and manners of those who travel. People whom you meet crossing the country from west to east are, on

the whole, polite, accommodating, and good-natured. Politeness to women is certainly characteristic of the spirit of the people, and makes travel for ladies alone entirely becoming and independent.

"During the night of Thursday the double engines tugged and puffed up the mountains, and at early morning we could discern that we were running downhill on the eastern side, where the waters flow in another direction. The second day is the time to get down to business and get adapted. The way is rather dry and tedious, and yet there is no hardship unless you are inclined to complain — and who is not? The country, dry, barren, and lonely as it seems, yet bears some marks of civilization and culture, here and there, and it is noticeable that fewer Indians cling to the train or linger about the stations than thirty years ago. Where the Indians are I do not know. Some say they have gone farther south.

"Ogden looks large and bustling, the focus of industry and railways, a point from which you can go anywhere, if you take the right train; and if you take the wrong train, you are sure to be landed somewhere. Onward through to Omaha the country shows increasing cultivation; stations are more frequent. Pleasant farms and industrious populations tell of the increasing life and power of the State. Omaha is a beautiful town with a public school situated on a noble eminence that overlooks a boundless country of land and river.

"When one comes near the city of Chicago, he feels

a little throb of wonder, mystery, and fear. Chicago is a terrible town, not pleasant, but awful, industrially, commercially, socially, or morally. All the world is there, of every tribe and race and nation on the earth. It seems now to have an overflow of population, more than can be employed or fed, and thousands of industrious men have left to find in other fields or cities an outlet for their pent-up, smothered life. Externally Chicago is indeed a terrible city, full of all human powers, destined to a greater greatness among the cities of the world; not a pleasant city to live in, it may be, but how little that has to do with the founding of the cities of the world; the natural centers of activity settle that!

"One day more, through a thickly peopled country, where towns, villages, and cities are seen as flashlights in the darkness of night or flecking the brilliant landscape by day; and we arrive at Boston, on time to a minute (three o'clock), and from the train in half an hour step into a pleasant little cottage house, with table spread and adorned with flowers."

A few days after his arrival he wrote: "We are comfortably settled in the midst of beauty above and around, and our hearts are blooming with memories and gratitude fairer than earth or sky."

Soon afterwards he wrote: "I have kept quite still and am rather enjoying it. I am about, so, and do not expect anything else. I went to Commencement, and

returned as soon as I could get out. I have been out on the trolley cars, twenty miles. They run everywhere and afford the easiest outing. I went to church on Sunday morning and heard Roderick. I have rarely enjoyed a service of greater refinement, dignity, and reverence."

By husbanding his strength he was able to enjoy much. In another note he says: "If I am able, I am going to Cambridge this afternoon, not to do anything, but to meet the ministers, who have an address and an hour together. I shall not be able to hear the address by Fenn, but maybe I will dine with them, and come home."

On July 18, 1900, Dr. Stebbins wrote: "Commencement at Harvard is a great day. The order and ceremony of the occasion are impressive, and one feels that a university is a school not only of learning, but also of manners and propriety. There is in it, too, a mingled joy and sobriety, such as youth feels when his academic course is ended and the realities of practical life and experience are before him. The scene is impressive, giving a kind of cosmopolitan view of society, its complex and multiplied interests and increasing wants. All sorts of learning, from Greek letters to veterinary medicine, from philosophy to dentistry, from fine arts to sanitary engineering, are included, to meet the demands of society in this modern age. As the scene moves on, the chief figure is

President Eliot. With ease of natural dignity and refinement, he announces the graduation of those who have pursued prescribed studies, and confers academic honors upon men distinguished for public service in different fields. His voice, without effort, by simple force of articulation and clear utterance, is distinctly heard where other voices are lost — indistinct murmurs among the waiting throng. This clear enunciation is characteristic of the man. Among university men he is an acknowledged leader. In that patient, long-winded tact that pursues a purpose with untiring will, in the conception of the relation of means to ends, which is the wisdom of all great enterprises, and the common sense of daily life, he is unsurpassed. One says, 'I wish he were President of the United States.' But is a four years' hold of the policy of a party a greater influence than a thirty-years' presidency of a great university? Influence may be difficult to define, but there is a distinction, no doubt, between quantity and quality. President Eliot has demonstrated, if anybody ever doubted it, that power must be at the center if anything would be made to go.

"An important event is the coming of twelve hundred teachers from Cuba to be taught at Harvard and to observe the manners and customs of the country. The fact that they wanted to come and that Harvard invited them to come is an unspeakable good. While war is to be deplored and the doctrine that might makes right is to be repudiated, it cannot be

denied that might makes a way for right. The coming of the teachers from Cuba is a signal event of our time, changing the lurid glare of war to a beacon-light warning and cheering the nations. Cuba is doing well, better than in centuries before."

Later he wrote: "The Cubans have concluded their studies and delights, and are about to return. They have had a 'great time.' Their coming may be reckoned among the distinguished events of our time, and illustrates in a striking manner that in the great union and relation of peoples and nations in the modern age a great nation cannot put forth its power and receive the approval of mankind without bestowing some good upon the world."

Of the death of Collis P. Huntington, he wrote: "A conspicuous figure in the business of the world, and a striking illustration of the union of daring yet careful energy and great opportunity, he was a born genius of business, with a keen scent for values. He asked no favors and gave none. He stuck to his 'line of things' and knew what he was good for. He also had a fine perception of what other men were good for, and commonly put the right man in the right place."

Life in Dr. Stebbins's new surroundings opened very pleasantly. To be near his son and many friends, to have all his family around him, to be free from care and responsibility and yet to be able to preach as

opportunity offered, was happiness. In August he preached in Plymouth, and was much impressed with its charm and historical interest. He wrote entertainingly of it for the *Pacific Unitarian*, in which he always felt a deep interest:

"Monuments and memorials are here and there and everywhere, from the posts of the doors of ancient houses to chiseled stone of monumental grandeur. Relics of ancient custom, from spinning-wheels, firelocks, and swords to records of nearly three centuries, give an impression of a past on the theater of human action which no scene of wild Nature in her awful silence suggests. The presence of man gives chief interest to the world, and his fortunes, brief as they are compared with the geologic ages, are forever the theme of history, philosophy, poetry, and song. The fame and interest of Plymouth will increase as time goes on and the mind of the country from East to West becomes more historic. The town holds its own. Though it will not be a great center of thronging population, it will be all the more on that account the appropriate keeper of some of the most interesting archives that attest the unbroken chain that unites our country with the great struggles for liberty throughout the world. What would have been the result if these rocky shores had been a field of gold? I will not undertake to picture the scene or write up the past with an *if*. I glory in the great and honorable past, and am not unmindful of the debt I owe to the

master-spirits who rule the race, yet 'I think it lucky I was born so late.'"

In September his son, Horatio, entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and as his daughter Lucy was in Radcliffe, the family home was established in Cambridge.

In October occurred the fiftieth anniversary of the San Francisco church, and he sent a letter of greeting:

"We do well to celebrate with praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving the half-century anniversary of our church. It has been a most honorable and much-beloved institution, and, under God, has kept alive the sacred fire kindled by this inspiration, and replenished the fountain of that stream that flows from age to age and from generation to generation, refreshing the life of man as long as time shall endure.

"The origin of our church is a testimony of the common want of our nature for some recognition of its divine relations, and is a sure guaranty that religion will never die out on the earth. While yet the site of this town was a heap of sand, and the lazy tide swept in upon a hitherto idle shore, a few men who felt that religion was the high and final interpretation of human life, in harmony with reason, intelligence, and moral sense, and that faith in God is the supreme action of the mind and heart and will, met in confidence and trust toward Him for mutual counsel and prayer, and

laid the foundations of that spiritual structure the corner-stone of which is the heart of man.

"From that beginning this church has had a constant life of worship, teaching, and work in harmony with those great principles of truth that are the essential things of faith and duty. We inquire for no man's private opinions, nor establish rules of believing as standards of salvation. Our passport is a sense of need and a desire to be partakers and helpers in that worship, teaching, and work in which our relations to God and one another are expressed. Our great affirmations are God, truth, and our fellow-men. To have had a part in founding this church on these eternal things that remain through all time or opinion, and to cherish all progress of thought in every realm of man's dominion or of God's inspiration, is, indeed, reasonable cause of gratitude; and to be partaker and helper of its life and power is a source of present joy.

"A half-century is a considerable period of time, reckoned by human days — a brief hour in the eternal years. But God is ever near and Truth is ever young, and by working with Him we have perpetual youth, and our eternal life goes on. So we hail those who have lived on into the nearer presence of God, and we salute those who are yet with us whose memory goes swiftly back to fifty years ago, or have later joined the un-unbroken line of living men as they move in divine procession. Salute them as they pass before us, the living generation that unites the future of the earth

with the future of heaven and keeps unbroken the ranks of immortals as an unseen Hand waves the generations on or off the stage! Now, finally, salute the brethren each and all, named or unnamed — those who have wrought long and well and bear rich sheaves from the harvest of years, or those who go forth in the morning with the song of the reapers. Salute John Perry, the revered and honorable, and the host of others whose names cannot be written, besides noble women without number, on whom be honor and blessing evermore."

In early October he had the great pleasure of revisiting his old parish at Portland, Maine. It is something of a test to go back to a place left thirty-six years before, but he found a few who cherished his memory, and a multitude who as children had either come under his influence or who had heard of him from their fathers. A large congregation gathered to hear him, and after the service crowded the parish house for nearly an hour to greet him. He preached with great vigor upon the possibilities of manhood, thrilling his hearers and giving the younger generation a better understanding of those traditions of his power under which they had grown up.

He was able to assist Dr. Charles G. Ames at the funeral service of his lifelong friend, the Reverend Cyrus A. Bartol. About this time he contributed an article on Christmas and the New Year to the *Pacific Unitarian*, a passage from which gives its quality:

"What does the Son of Man represent? There have been a great many attempts to define Christianity, from a patent-right scheme of salvation to some plan of great believing that should be a divine contract between God and the soul; but all our great convictions are apprehensions — not comprehensions. Our own being is as great a mystery as God's being, and we are so allied to Him by nature that we are called the children of God. Christianity is the impersonation in man and men of this common nature. The religion of Jesus is God in humanity; or, as Theodore Parker said, 'Christianity is Humanity' — that is, human nature at its best. All attempts to define it in dogmatic form will fail. Jesus was so human that he could say, 'I and my Father are one,' and Augustine said that Christianity is in human nature, expressed in Jesus as the type and ideal of humankind."

On January 22, 1901, he wrote entertainingly of winter:

"Winter begins when it gets here; spring when it's a mind to; summer when it can't help it; and autumn comes as wisdom comes! We all know how that is commonly late! If scenery has any effect on civilized man's character or constitution, if climate changes the quality of his blood, this winter terribleness and glory must have had something to do with fashioning the northern races of mankind. But winter is not severe on men or on domestic animals, if they are well cared for. Animals grow fat, and men and women enjoy the

fine clear cold, if they are well protected; and there is a kind of happy pride in standing before it, though unprotected none can stand. It is this necessity for protection and provision that has a moral effect not felt in milder latitudes. Almost all the birds and smaller animals are driven out by winter, but an ill-boding crow the other day sat on the branch of a melancholy elm yonder and cawed and cawed in that fine voice which the fox in the fable praised; and now, while I write, a fine squirrel, with waving bush and lively action, runs across the brilliant snow, apparently happy as a lamb in May. But somber wisdom, melancholy grandeur, terrible power, and brilliant glories are the characteristics of winter. Nature puts on severe manners, relieved by cheerful fireside, domestic, and social joy. It is the season for study, for evening talk, and genial hospitalities. The glory and power of it impressed the Psalmist, who saw in it that sublime Will that looses the bands of Orion, or binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades."

In November he wrote a charming letter to an eight-year-old San Francisco boy.

"My dear Boy: Have you forgotten me? I think of you often and wish I could see you, and walk about with you. There are great elm trees here, and the name Elmwood Avenue is given to the street. Right over the way is the Lowell house, where the poet James Russell Lowell was born. Among these elms are many

squirrels! gray, with fine bushy tails and bright eyes. They are quite tame. Yesterday a fellow (squirrel, I mean) came to the door, and Mrs. Stebbins gave him a nut, and he ran with it up a tree, and sat down on his hind legs, his tail curled over him like a feather, and his eyes sparkling like gems; and he cracked the nut and ate it, all the time looking down cheerfully, not afraid of falling. I thought of the fable that Emerson wrote about the Mountain and the Squirrel, and I said to myself that *I* would write to you about it. You know what a fable is: a story made up just to give a hint of something true, that he didn't think of before! Ask your father to find the fable (I think he'll do it), and as you read it, imagine the squirrel sitting on his hind legs looking toward Mount Diablo and having a little talk. Learn the fable, not in a hurry, but, say, three lines a day; and when you have got it so it will go itself if you open your mouth, write and tell about it — what you think it means. My love to you all."

The following month he added: "I only want to tell you not to be in a hurry about that squirrel. He is here now. I see him, his fine bush over his back as he sits on his hind legs, looks every way, and then jumps! I hope you will not have any trouble with your eyes. I have known boys and girls who have been obliged to wear glasses for a while, and then have got well soon. It makes a young fellow look very learned to wear glasses! You would think of asking him some great

questions! Thank your father for his fine letter to me. My love to all, especially to your sisters! They do not know me, but then, I want them to know that I love you all. I am yours, dear boy, HORATIO STEBBINS."

In a letter soon after New Year's Day, 1901, he wrote at length, concluding: "I have called myself, 'Yours affectionately,' or something else as good for more than thirty years, and I stick to it yet!"

At the annual meeting of the San Francisco church held in February, a telegram was sent to Dr. Stebbins: "Our gratitude and our regard increase as time reveals the measure of the blessings we have enjoyed." In response he wrote:

"MY DEAR MR. SYMMES: The telegram in your name, and in the name of the people of the First Unitarian Church, means to me more of gratitude and love than I can express, and I beg of you all to let me go free with a voiceless thought that overflows my heart. Indulge me, though, if you will, in the expression of my great happiness in you all, in the inexhaustible resource I find in my experience as your minister and my citizenship among you for the lifetime of a generation. I have enjoyed a degree of intellectual and moral independence limited only by my ability to share the freedom of him whom the truth makes free. Your genial minds have been the climate most friendly to my nature, and your liberal hearts have responded with cheerful hospitality to noblest sentiments of humanity.

"Your word to me spoken across the land carries with it a weight of meaning that causes my heart to quiver with emotion, and reason to find becoming refuge in humility. But I *will* speak. If I have, under God, and by the inspiration of his spirit, illumined your common mind and heart with thoughts that send their beams afar, making this world more human, the heart of man more prophetic, the human more divine and the divine more human to our imagination and affection, then indeed have I cause for the deepest gratitude and the happiest joy. The greatest blessing that man can receive is a thought, an imagination, a conviction concerning his own nature and his relation to God; that gives courage to faith, and transforms the world to a scene of discipline and teaching for moral and spiritual beings in the likeness of God. In this great faith may we all be living, above the limitations or contradictions of provincial thought. In the name of God our Father and in the name of our common human heart, I salute you all, and may blessing, honor, truth, and love be upon you and abide with you evermore."

In March Dr. Stebbins was seriously ill with pneumonia, but his good constitution withstood the attack, and he was soon preaching now and then. In July he preached in Dorchester, and he very much enjoyed visiting, in company with his son Horatio, the scenes of his early youth, near Springfield. No member of the

family now lives at the old homestead, but it was a satisfaction to take luncheon in the house in which he was born, and to show his son the fields where he ploughed and mowed as a boy.

In September he was asked to take a prominent part at the Saratoga Conference, but felt that his health was too precarious to justify it.

On October 2 his son Roderick was married to Edith Endicott Marean, in Appleton Chapel of Harvard College, Cambridge. Dr. Stebbins shared the wedding service with Dr. Samuel M. Crothers, and the dignity of his manner, as he uttered his few words of affectionate recognition and counsel, made the ceremony one never to be forgotten by even the least interested of the many who heard them. He was in bright spirits at the reception which followed and made it evident that he was especially happy in this marriage.

On February 22, 1902, he wrote a kindly letter, one sentence of which showed his lessening strength: "I have been bottled up for a week with something, and may not be out for another week. I do not go out much, and then not alone. I notice the dropped stitches." He regretfully informed me of the fact that Dr. Charles W. Eliot had been obliged to give up his promised visit to the Pacific Coast, and suggested a "disappointment addendum" to an announcement which he had sent — his last article. The letter concludes:

"I cannot write more now. Yours ever

"HORATIO STEBBINS"

These were the last words penned by that loving hand. He had been weary all day and was taken suddenly down that night. The attack was much like that of two years before, and was followed by alternating periods of improvement and relapse. His friend, the Reverend A. W. Jackson, was in Cambridge on March 19 and called to inquire for him. Hearing that he was in the house, Dr. Stebbins expressed a wish to see him, and Mr. Jackson went to his room. "To my great surprise and delight," he wrote, "I found him sitting up and dressed. He was apparently weak, but his eye was clear, his countenance did not look wan, he was apparently free from pain, and the old smile was there. His conversation was in his noblest vein — of books and thoughts and friends."

Among the many San Francisco friends to whom Dr. Stebbins was warmly attached was Kate Douglas Wiggin Riggs, whom he befriended and helped when she came to San Francisco from Santa Barbara, a talented and ambitious kindergartner, with her mother and her sister, Miss Nora Smith. They were frequent and welcome guests at the family table, and were very near through all the changing years. On March 31, he dictated through his wife this tribute of his undying love:

"Dear Kate, What you say transcends all my powers of expression, but if I should let go I don't know where I should begin or end. You have always

been among my great admirations, and my intellectual and moral delights. That I have had any influence or standing with you has increased my self-respect, tempered by gratitude and humility. What can I say but repeat what you know already — my great affection for you all, your husband, your mother, Nora, the ever-beloved and honored, whom to know is pride enough for a lifetime, and gratitude to fill the heart with joy."

Shortly before the final attack and death of Dr. Stebbins the eightieth birthday of Edward Everett Hale was royally celebrated in Boston and elsewhere. Dr. Stebbins was too ill to attend. He said several times, "If I were going to speak, there is one thing I should say." Finally, he took pencil and paper, and wrote the following words, the last which were written by his own hand:

"The time will come when men will ask, Who was he? His religion was that universal principle of human nature that includes mankind. It is that great principle which, carried into the world of thought, compels all men, when brought face to face with it, to confess that neither station nor wealth, nor conspicuous popularity, is the final test of greatness, but that mysterious quality that we recognize as character, diffused through all the activities of the mind, uniting the manly and the godly in one. Let those who will undertake to define it, they will fail. It has many ele-

ments in combination that defy all chemistry, revealing God in man. It is flesh and blood, and bone and marrow, and nerve and brain, suffused with feeling, free will, moral force, imagination, and love."

This indicates how fully and firmly he maintained to the last his intellectual and spiritual faculties.

On March 22 he dictated a long letter full of generous affection, and in good courage. He said: "Your desire to see me, ardently expressed, is sincerely felt and reciprocated. Time and events only can decide." He concludes with: "I am living on reduced strength which I use with economy in the enjoyment of many blessings, and in gratitude for all good like yours. In all this Mrs. Stebbins and myself are ever united and we give you and Winifred our abounding love."

A few days later he became notably weaker, and suffered almost unendurable pain for two weeks, so that he prayed for release. He was calm and collected when free from agonizing pain, and on April 4 he dictated a dispatch to San Francisco: "Salute all the people, and give them my blessing. Let them have a service of praise and prayer in the church, Sunday morning, April 13." On the 8th he breathed his last. A noble life had ended; a great heart was at rest. The private funeral on Friday morning, April 11, 1902, was conducted by Dr. Samuel M. Crothers. The burial the following day was at Portland, Maine.

Several years before Dr. Stebbins had prepared with calm consideration a memorandum of the order he would like to have followed at his funeral service. A few weeks before the end he asked his son Roderick to send it to San Francisco, as expressing his wishes. In form and substance it is so characteristic that it is given. He especially asked that all eulogy and remarks be omitted and his wishes were reverently respected. The service was tenderly beautiful and impressive. Loving hands had appropriately decorated the church with flowers; friends from far and near gathered to express their devotion; Mr. Leavitt's sermon was singularly fit, inferentially applicable to the noble life. The singing of his favorite hymns was sympathetic, and the atmosphere throughout breathed the deepest affection and reverence.

Dr. Stebbins's Memorandum follows: "I suggest this order of service at my funeral, if it be well-pleasing and will relieve friends of care:"

1. Organ.
2. "Lead, Kindly Light" — Solo.
3. Prayer by Minister and People: "Blessed is the Lord God of Ages, who never ceaseth to draw more nigh."
4. Bible Reading: John's Gospel, 20: 1–17.
5. Prayer by Minister and People: "Lo! at length the True Light."
6. The Lord's Prayer, by Minister.
7. Hymn 136. "Great God, how Infinite art Thou": by the Congregation.
8. Last words by Minister, the People all standing: "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write:

> From henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so saith the spirit, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them: — The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen."

At the concurrent hour a memorial service was held in the Cambridge church, under the direction of Dr. Crothers. Dr. Hale offered the prayer; the Reverend Francis Tiffany spoke of Dr. Stebbins's early life, and of the impressions that his high ideals had made on his fellow-students. From his father he inherited his strength of character and rugged independence; and from his mother, who was a woman of deep religious feeling and poetic nature, came his tender sympathy. Directness of speech, distinction of manner, and power of original statement distinguished him through his entire career.

President Charles W. Eliot referred to his great service to the State, saying that he had done more than could be estimated to give the California Universities the place they occupy among the educational institutions of the land and to shape their present standards. As a result of his presence it is everywhere understood that these universities are built on freedom of thought. He referred to Dr. Stebbins's ability to stand alone as a leader of men, independent and strong; and his finest tribute was in citing as proof of immortality Dr. Stebbins's noble life. He said: "In the presence of a growing and expanding soul like that

of Dr. Stebbins, men feel that there is something in man independent of the body, not born to die."

Dr. George Batchelor gratefully recalled the character of his influence. He applied to him the words of Paul: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." His fearless spirit, his power of leadership, his loving sympathy with the young, and his comforting courage with the thought of old age were all included in a "sound mind."

Dr. James De Normandie spoke of his work in Portland, and then added: "When Dr. Stebbins succeeded Starr King in California, he did as much for that State, but in other ways, as did the golden-lipped preacher who saved it to the Union. It does not often fall to the lot of any man to have such opportunity given, for a man to have the gifts to lay a whole land under obligation for his noble work. There was in Dr. Stebbins a rare union of power and pathos, of strength and sweetness, of fierce denunciation of the wrong-doer and tender sympathy for every burdened or penitent one, of the prophet's vision and the prophet's faith in the day of triumphant good. Added to these qualities, the secret of that remarkable ministry, reaching to eighty years, was its transparent reality. Here was no sensationalism, no artificiality, no theatrical posing, only entire compliance in a few spiritual verities. By these he lived and wrought, and in their peace he calmly passed on."

The benediction was pronounced by his lifelong friend, Dr. Edward Everett Hale.

On April 22, the Unitarian Club of California paid tribute of its great respect and gratitude by the adoption of fervent resolutions, and on April 23 a memorial service was held by the Pacific Coast Conference, in session at San Francisco.

The press, east and west, was generous and deeply appreciative. A single sentence from the *Christian Register* editorial is taken as representative of all:

"He was a tower of strength, a steadfast promoter of large ideas, moral ideals and the old-fashioned virtues which were by inheritance and tradition his own. He was stalwart in person, of strong mind, firm will, unshaken integrity, and unspotted life. At his best, his preaching was in the higher ranges of the religious life. He suggested the moral grandeur of the universe in which we live, and the dignity of human nature and human duty."

In addition, many friends and admirers sent words of affection or reminiscence. From these, that of the Reverend John White Chadwick is given in part, as it reveals personality in a manner no one else has approached. He writes:

"We shall all agree, I think, that the peculiar power which Dr. Stebbins exerted was that of a grand and unique personality; and personality is always hard to

analyze. The whole is greater than the sum of all the parts. There was the towering form,—

> 'the front of Jove himself;
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
> A combination, and a form, indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal,
> To give the world assurance of a man.'

There was that marvelous voice; the 'music of mild lutes' was in it, and anon it was a 'clarion of disdain'; but these were but instruments. Behind them was the informing soul; and that streamed into everything he said and did, and made the ungirt spontaneity of his private life of one piece with his most carefully considered public speech. He was a master of expression, and struck out phrases of unique and startling beauty, which reminded you not of books, but of the living world. They smacked of the soil in which he grew. They were ruddy with the hue of his immediate experience. He was no phrase-maker except as his large thoughts demanded adequate expression. His humanity was his central trait. I never knew a man who could more vitally appropriate the Latin poet's boast. Nothing human was foreign to him, least of all the passions which devastate our human life. I have heard him talk of these with a kind of sacred fury in his speech; and he was as pitiful as Jesus of the sinful folk. Yet he was not more human in his awful sense of life's tragic implications than in his delight of everything that was compact of human pleasantness

and kindliness, and I cannot easily conceive a kinder spirit than his own. He was a great citizen. I could not walk the streets of San Francisco by his side without being touched by the reverence and affection in which he was held by the people of that city. But I shall best remember him saying the morning grace at his own table, the words were so simple and so strong, and pervaded with such a tender sense of the perfect mutual understanding of heavenly Father and the man who prayed."

Mr. Chadwick also wrote for the memorial this beautiful sonnet:

TO HORATIO STEBBINS

On the same day, thine by the Western sea,
Mine where the Eastern rolls its music in,
Our work began, the continent between
Our sundered ways. Thwart that immensity,
When doubt and fear had well-nigh mastered me,
How has thy cheery message been
A trumpet calling me to rise and win
O'er foes abject triumphant victory!

The Eastern and the Western ocean make
One music. Even so thy heart and mine
Have beat accordant. Silent now is thine;
Yet still from thy great spirit I will take
Fresh courage daily, conquer by thy sign,
Be something braver, better for thy sake.

Dr. A. W. Jackson, who formerly lived in Santa Barbara, California, later in Concord, Massachusetts, wrote:

"In my long acquaintance with him, I was always peculiarly sensible of his moral elevation. This was not on occasions only, when strong impulses might move him, but in the unrestraint of private affection, as in the pulpit or on the platform, there it was, a grace that never forsook him. In his fiercest wrath, he never lost his poise; in his keenest sorrow, he witnessed to those about him that a suffering may be an unshaken soul. He could err in judgment, err in action, as all may do; but even in error men felt him noble. He may not have belonged to the order of saints, but surely to that of heroes. His mien was patrician, but his manhood was imperial.

"Another feature was what I will dare to call a genius for friendship. A man so positive in his convictions, dealing with so many interests and 'ever a fighter,' is reasonably sure to provoke resentments; and Dr. Stebbins did so. At the same time he attracted people to him as few ever can, and held them in an allegiance that is much too rare. In that far Western city he was surrounded by a cordon of friends that neither personal malice nor partisan antipathy could break through, men and women whom even error could hardly have alienated and whom trial made more steadfast. The explanation is easy enough; it was a case of a large nature attracting other natures, and holding them steadfast by its own fidelity."

A sonnet, written by Mr. Jackson at the time he was

preparing his *Life of Martineau*, associated lovingly the two leaders, and should find place here:

TO HORATIO STEBBINS

Dear Friend, whose noble presence fails to show
The regal grandeur of thy inner plan,—
Patrician mien, but an imperial man,
I link thy name with that of Martineau.
He sage, thou prophet! His the orient glow
Of one who all surveys from peaks of Darien.
Thine to call back dead souls to life again:
Isaiah's flame, the tones of Cicero.

He is the Phosphor of the coming day;
Awakener thou of those who dwell in night.
Through him men see the height, through thee adore;
And they who write your epitaphs should say
Of him, "He touched the mountain crests with light."
Of thee, "He thrilling witness to its glory bore."

These words of loving appreciation are but few of the many that were written. Wherever Dr. Stebbins was known, he was beloved, and the extent of reverent regard for him testifies to the breadth and depth of his humanity.

Horatio Stebbins was a type of America's best and most characteristic manhood. He was essentially a preacher, set apart by fitness and divine desire to be a teacher and inspirer of his fellow-men. He was utterly fearless in following where truth seemed to lead. He often saw many sides where over-zealous little souls saw but one, and was patient by reason of profound faith. He was not of the class of ardent reformers who

prescribe small remedies for great difficulties. Nothing disturbed his sublime faith; nothing that contradicted the goodness, wisdom, and love of God could enter his mind or heart. He believed in the realities of moral and spiritual being. He never allowed amiable commonplaces to confuse his meaning, and never shirked an issue when it could not honorably be avoided. Thousands can testify to his generosity of spirit and his ever ready helpfulness. No service or kindness was too great for him to render to others. His manner sometimes deceived those who did not know him well, but he proved his love for his fellow-men by constant service and sacrifice.

Through his firm faith in spiritual verities, his keen insight, and his firmly logical mind Dr. Stebbins was a seer. His fine imagination, his delicate sensibility, and his originality of expression constituted him a poet. As a speaker he was eloquent in the highest sense. Rarely has such profound and virile thought been so beautifully expressed. His prose style was admirable, and through its poetic imagery and aptness of illustration was often more akin to poetry than much writing accorded that classification by reason of metrical form.

His burial spot at Portland is marked by a granite boulder from a New England pasture, simply inscribed. It is a fitting symbol of the simplicity and integrity of his life and character. Its solidity and individuality are akin to his. It owes its strength and

symmetry to its power of resistance to disintegrating forces. His character was as firm as granite. Time and events had softened the outline, but had not changed the substance. He served God with all the consecration of his Pilgrim ancestors. He had the daring faith of Job, and powerfully set forth the reality, the all-embracing power and love, of God. His unquestioning trust, and his passion for truth; his scorn for the ignoble and reliance on right, his serenity and his reverence made him a constant influence for good. Great as was his power as a preacher and a minister to his fellow-men, he transcended all his manifestations and was greater as a man.

The sun still shines, and happy, blithesome birds
Are singing on the swaying boughs in bloom.
My eyes look forth and see no sign of gloom,
No loss casts shadow on the grazing herds;
And yet I know a grief that feeble words
Can ne'er express, for in the silent tomb
Is laid the body of my friend, the doom
Of silence on that matchless voice. Now girds
My spirit for the struggle he would praise.
A leader viewless to the mortal eye
Still guides my steps, still calls with clarion cry
To deeds of honor, and my thoughts would raise
To seek the truth and share the love on high.
With loyal heart I'll follow all my days.

CHAPTER VIII

LETTERS TO A SON

1881–1899

THE intimate companionship with his father, in which Roderick Stebbins had grown up, made his departure for Harvard College a serious event to both. On the day he left home, Dr. Stebbins began a journal, to afford in some degree a needed channel for self-expression. It was not long continued, however, merging naturally into daily letters to his boy, who was in turn hardly less faithful. The close relation between the two was kept up for many years by these almost daily letters. The pages of the brief journal, which includes not more than a score of large fools-cap pages, reveal a side of Dr. Stebbins's character which many never discovered — the deep humility of the man, his self-questionings and his utter surrender to the eternal strength and love which were the heart of his religion.

August 25, 1877. Roderick left this morning for Cambridge. The parting with him is very severe and has subjected my tired heart to a new strain. It has been a rough day, indeed, and tempests are within. I am truly grateful that he does not suffer as I do. I learn daily something new of the power of suffering. I have written almost a sermon to-day. Nothing but

work would have kept me from the deepest distress, and as it is I have broken down once utterly....But I am strong now, and clear, calm light rests on all my summits.

September 2. This is Roderick's birthday! Eighteen happy years! His heart has beat within mine, and it has not been easy to tell whether it was mine or his that had the deepest throb.

[Dr. Stebbins seldom stopped long enough in his thought for his daily work to consider himself, but one single entry that follows may indicate how little he realized what he gave to others. Only by genuine understanding of the man can one know how truly his calm serenity implied not indifference nor insensibility, but conquest.]

November 5. It was twenty-six years ago to-day that I was ordained at Fitchburg. O swift years! and how deep is my disappointment in myself! I am not what I ought to be and what I might have been, either in my attainments and power to set forth moral and spiritual truth, or in the elevation and resource of my character....How little I know, and how weak I am!

[Two years later Dr. Stebbins took up his discarded journal, with a word of half-regret that he had let his "daily talk" with Roderick supersede entirely the independent value of memoranda "that catch the light and shade of life and thought as they fly."]

September 6, 1879. Roderick left this morning to return to Cambridge. Although I parted with him in

complete self-control, it yet cost me a sharp pain, and after he had gone I went into his room, looked in the vacant places, and buried my face in my hands and wept. I find it no easier to part with him than a year ago. I am most happy and blessed in him. I must not let my love interfere with him, or stand in the way of his own individuality. Neither must I allow my affection to intrude upon him. His mind must be respected and my love must be wise and high, not too familiar, and certainly not meddlesome.

September 7. How this strange sense of Roderick's absence oppresses me! It has almost overcome me two or three times to-day. When he left me on the 25th of August two years ago, I thought that would be my severest trial; but hard as it was, this is hardly less so.

[The preceding extracts have been given because no other available material reveals so clearly the tenderness and strength of affection that controlled Dr. Stebbins in his family and home relations. Let the first selection from his letters be one written on an anniversary of his father's birth. He held his father's memory in loving reverence and often spoke of him.]

March 5, 1881

This is the anniversary of my father's birthday. He died in January, 1859, aged eighty-one years. He was a man of limited experience, but of uncommon endowment; a polemic in politics, religion, and morals. His

life was spent near the place where he was born, and he rarely went beyond the notch in the hills on the east, or the level plains on the west, where the setting sun measured his earthly days. He was a man of native dignity of mind and feeling, and everything low or vulgar shrank away abashed from his presence. He had more books than all the families in District No. 10. Among the first books I ever saw were Miss Maria Edgeworth's "Evenings at Home," which he read aloud to us as we sat round the evening fire. He was esteemed the wise and long-headed man by his neighbors, and was respected and beloved. He was singularly happy with children, though he did not fully sympathize with youth owing to his temperament and constitution. I can never forget the singular tenderness of his voice, the sweetness of his manners, or the calmness of his authority. My mother died when I was six years old. The influence of that event on my father's mind made strong impression on me. I was too young to feel the force of what had happened, but his great grief, restrained and borne with that calmness that nothing but depth can give, impressed me in a manner that I can never fully describe, and has left its stamp upon my own character. Often in my mature years have the lessons which he taught me sprung up like fountains to refresh me. My love for him was very great, as was the love of all his sons.

I have been sitting here having Mr. Congdon tell

about remarkable horses that he has known! A little queer one-sided knowledge is pleasant sometimes. I like to get hold of a man who will tell me some odd thing away from my habits and tastes, though I have a taste for horses. He wants me to go out to the track and see a span there; $25,000! what extravagance and nonsense, when there are probably a thousand children in the city not as well fed or clothed!

When I was a youth, I worked in the open field: I often felt that it was hard, and I longed to be free; but when I began to study, I found *that* hard, and it seemed to me that to work with my muscles or the bare earth would be a rest! A noble self-direction always requires firmness, and often it requires fortitude. It requires more energy to lead a true student life, than it does to pile up stones in the field, or to weed corn in the heat of the sun. You have not been situated as I was, but I hope you will get as much discipline of will and purpose in academic life as I got in rustic labors. Concentration is the soul of discipline.

I have just heard of the death of Dr. Putnam, of Roxbury. The event calls to mind some incidents in my early experience. I knew him when I first entered on my professional life. He used to go to Sterling, his native town, and to the old family homestead to spend his vacations. When I first went to Fitchburg I rode over to Sterling, a dozen miles, to see him. I formed a

great liking for him. He was a man of stalwart good sense and roundabout wisdom. He was a fine preacher to eminently respectable people. He was an immense reader of current literature, and his sermons were suggested by the illustration of life and experience that he found in his reading. His style was simple, pure, and strong; and his manners in the pulpit were a happy combination of reverence, manliness, and enthusiasm.

About Bismarck's policy with socialism, I did not write, because it would lead into discussions that I could hardly state in a manner fit for a theme. The gist of it is this: There is in Germany a keen popular discontent concerning the present social conditions of men, based on wealth, rank, labor, capital, etc. The discussions call in question the present order of things, and threaten to remodel society. Bismarck's policy is in the suppression of debate in the Reichstag, and the suppression of the press. He proposes to throttle free discussion, and thus shut the safety-valve of popular discontent. That policy is fatal in the long run, and will make him the hero of a great folly, and maybe a great disaster. Errors of thought and intellect are not to be corrected by putting bits in the mouths of men. Bismarck is verging, so it seems to me, toward that intoxication of self-will, in which everything and anything seems possible, because they are desired; when force is greater than insight, and

courage greater than far-sightedness, and will be more conspicuous than sympathy with the day and hour. His great services may yet be balanced by a stupendous folly.

I met —— —— to-day, and he told me he had nothing to do. I am sorry for it. It is a trial to any man, and it is stupid and exasperating to a bright and active fellow like him. If ever you have felt that work is painful, and duty irksome, think of the utter misery of doing nothing, and having nothing to do. I have been much blessed in all my life. I have never been stranded on the shore of involuntary idleness, but have always found a place of usefulness, where I could earn my bread by giving in work for value received.

I am thinking that you may be in Northboro to-night. Your description of ice-scenery calls to mind the most remarkable display of that kind I ever saw. It was in February, 1845. Nothing could surpass the brilliancy of the scene, under the illumination of the moon. The world seemed hung in pearls and diamonds, and every tree was transformed with light! A grove was more beautiful than the night-heavens, and seemed like a city let down from the sky. The dry sticks of rails and fence glanced in all the colors of the prism! I walked with Mary Fisher from the homestead under the elms to the weekly lyceum in the town hall, where the people of the village met. You may be

there to-night! Happy years have come and gone: yet not gone, for their beauty and love remain, and can never be lost.

Moody and Sankey are here. I think they are simple and plain men, not mercenary, and inclined to put the invitations and persuasions of religion on the grounds of reverence, duty, and love. They do not deal in the old staple doctrines of depravity, nor fill the background with lurid flames and selfish fears. They will draw crowds. The secret of it is the singing on the minor key. It kindles emotion, and unseals the fountain of tears, but it does not supply that power to the will which nothing but the enthusiasm of duty and love can do. Their influence will be wide and shallow, and soon will pass away. While they are a great improvement on the average revivalist of former years, both in their probable simplicity of character and in the superiority of their appeals to the sentiments, I do not feel that they can do much for me, nor am I at all inclined to join them, or to oppose them.

There are two classes of minds, my son, which are brought out very clearly in their relation to religion, and the questions involved in religion. One class is hard, dry, sterile, unimaginative, and dogmatic, whether believing or skeptical. It settles everything within positive, definite boundaries of affirmation or negation, because it sees so little. The other class,

longer-winged, longer-minded, deeper-breathing, with a roundabout and beyond-looking sympathy, see and feel the many-sidedness of truth, and are perplexed or grieved with its seemingly ever-changing, kaleidoscopic, transient appearance. To such natures, endowed with sight and deeper capacity of joy and suffering, there is always a struggle, *until the nature of truth is felt* and the mind and soul and heart are brought into sympathy with it.

Your questionings are prophetic, and even if they are trying, they are the clarifying process of the mind. In the first place, you must remember that all our great convictions are growths and not manufactures. Dogmatic religion can make a faith to order, the expedient of weakness and fear, but those whose hearts are nourished by the divine spirit can wait for dew and rain and wind. The thirst for "positive knowledge" in things spiritual is only an ignorant desire to extend the empire of mathematics over the kingdom of God. The demonstrable is soon exhausted, and what is apprehended is much more influential with us than what is comprehended. The great moral verities of our being are laid in eternal strength : but they do not account to us for all the methods of truth, more than yonder light by the sea casts revealing splendor upon the sun, or makes plain to us the soft and noiseless axle of the earth. They reveal, indeed, that light, here or there, is of the same nature, and all strength is from

the same will. Here, then, we are firm. The divine manifestations in man are the highest theme on which the mind can dwell. Historic grandeur invests Jesus as the unique expression of God in humanity. He must have felt himself to be the exponent of the race. His life and being are our common nature awakened and living in its relation to God. I cannot speak of him as "a beautiful spirit" unless beauty is made synonymous with power. His lovely, terrible, unique *personality* is what draws my wonder and love. Do you ask how he came to be that unique illustration of man in his divine relations? That is the mystery, also, of every other personality. What makes one man differ from another in the type of his being? It is the secret of all personality. It is true of every genuine life that is hid in God. How came Shakespeare to transcend all men, and yet to be recognized by all as a fuller representative of their own nature? It is his very characteristic to be natural, while he is so infinitely above us! While Christ is unique, the mystery is not unique. It is universal: we see it in daily life, and at our own firesides. We have little conception what our nature is in its fullness when brought into its highest relation with God. If you ask me what he is, I answer he is the personification of man, universal man, in his divine relations; and illustrates you and me in the possibilities of our being, under God. There is nothing new in Christianity but Jesus himself. There is not one single phase of spiritual truth in the New Testament

that had not flashed on the soul of some man before. The stones of Angel Island were here before the Bank of California, but they were not the Bank of California. Yet the only thing that is new is the Bank itself. *The order and unity and beauty, brought out of what was before disorder and fragmentary form* — such is the personality of Jesus in the moral and spiritual world.

Yours of the 21st came at breakfast. We notice with great satisfaction all that interests you. I am pleased that you have remembered your Uncle Roderick. Your words of simple and affectionate sympathy will be a great satisfaction. We are disposed, my son, to undervalue the expression of our thoughts and feelings to others: If only we can do it with simplicity and respectful sympathy it has great influence. To do it with true gentleness of manners and yet with moral strength is a great means of growth to ourselves and a great support to others.

I am gratified to get your idea of Irving. He must be a great actor, who presents his characters from ideas within, rather than from patterns without. Actors, generally, are only imitators, not men of inspiration and idea. Can any man personify completely all there is in any great character of Shakespeare? What a creature Shakespeare is! I have received great benefit from comparing him in his sphere with Jesus in his sphere. They both seem matchless in their

endowment. The one deals with human nature in its thoughts and passions on the ordinary plane of life; the other carries that human nature into its divine relations, and shows man in relation with God.

I have just received the memoir of Charles Lowe, my classmate in the Divinity School. It is a fine record of a pure and spotless life. He kept a journal! I have not! Do you? It has many advantages: first, it brings one to time, and compels a great discipline of the will; second, it fastens many thoughts, doings, sayings, events, which in the accumulations of experience afford a rich fund of satisfaction.

Mr. ——'s apparent neglect, is another of those things that you have got to get used to. It is sometimes very trying. Indulgent feeling, a kind of roundabout wisdom and charity, may find many apologies for such things in a man, but there is a residuum of impatience, and a feeling, too, that one will not expose himself again to what seems an indecorous neglect. The accidents of conduct, my son, are very great, and a man by a tone of voice or an air of indifference may lose the opportunity of a lifetime, when he has no thought of it! No man uses the English language correctly; and no man is up to the finest conduct always; truth is one, error is multiple.

Your account of —— confirms my general impression. The great balance and equity of the mind

is in having a taste for truth, or a poetic appreciation of it. Then the intellect may be as reckless as a comet, but reason and the heart will be strong as the sun. To put things merely analytically is the office of an incomplete development. A noble mind has centrifugal and centripetal tendencies; and if one is too great or out of harmony with the other, you whirl into bleak space, or are drawn, like the moth, into the flames.

I am impressed with your appreciation of our old and faithful servant. No better test of a man's manners and heart can be made than his way with those of inferior position, and especially his servants. There is that fine gradation of respect which makes them feel your sincerity, and also keeps their respect for you; which is as important to them as to you.

The sentimentalism of which you speak is a weakness, and sometimes an affectation. To be moved by fine emotions and sensibilities, restrained power and thought and feeling, gives the keynote of all moral force in conduct or address. You will strike the right key in "doubt and belief." What is doubt? and what is belief? Doubt is the spiritual world unsubdued, as the world of matter is a blind abstraction until intelligence has made its conquests. It is God's challenge to our souls to find him. Why has he not made belief as plain as the road to town, and stormed our spirits into faith in spite of us? Why does he stand at the

door and gently knock? Why does he not knock the door down and come in and take forcible possession? Because life is a conquest, and faith is a conquest over the dark obstruction of the senses, and the rude powers of our minds. Doubt is the childhood of the soul, the under-age of the will, and belief is the mind and heart trained to duty and love. If you come to particular doubts and to particular beliefs, there is yet a vast domain that must in all minds of any depth and richness be undecided. There are many things, on which to be decided is evidence only of a barren, sterile mind. The great beliefs are like climates; they are not berries, and pickles, and preserves.

The attempt to gain influence through second-rate motives is always degrading, and commonly in the end deceives the inventor. Serious, hearty earnestness, equally removed from lugubrious piety and irreverent frivolity, is the real power of any man's personality. There are a hundred things, in which there is "no hurt," that will ruin a man's influence before he knows it. This pertains especially to manners. To be genial without being silly, to be social yet easily dignified, is one way in which men gain influence, not by being like others, but by being unlike them. This matter of giving substitutes for religion, such as some scheme of philosophy, or a kink in science, is a short-breathed way of getting along, and deludes by a kind of momentary attraction, as a baby is diverted from his

mother's breast by a red apple, to be weary of it soon, and turn again to the fountains of life. The religious idea in things, events, and experience — that is the matter for the preacher; that is insight, and to set forth what he sees makes him teacher of men. That, while it runs parallel with ordinary knowledge, reveals a human element which the ordinary man does not see until it is shown to him!"

I have read swiftly Masson's sketch of Keats, just to refresh my mind and feeling with the impression of so fine a creature. He seems to dash the doctrine of heredity all in pieces. Indeed, heredity is not a law, but a tendency, and the tendency sometimes contradicts itself. Law means invariable sequence, tendency means general gravitation in a given direction. The one is science, the other is probability. One is of the nature of ascertainable cause and effect, the other is of the nature of unknown cause and effect. There is a disposition in some quarters to push our exact knowledge too far, in this matter of the human constitution. Our frame and its functions are not matters of positive demonstrable knowledge. Pathology and medicine are not exact sciences; neither is descent or heredity in man or animals. There sometimes seems to be a terrible and cruel truth in Renan's, I think, saying that human-life-and-society is a steaming moral compost from which grow the rarest flowers, and the only condition of having the flowers is having the compost.

The afflictions of human life are the perpetual wonder and trial of the heart. I remember distinctly when the impression first began to grow on my mind and feeling. It was during the early years of my experience in Fitchburg. I noticed how many came into the church on Sunday, in their mourning weeds. The selfish view of suffering and sorrow is surely an indication of a narrow mind and a pinched and stingy heart. The trials we are put to are a dark mystery, but they are a fact! and I think they are ground of faith in the wisdom and goodness of God; for a human world can be only on this condition; and unless God saw good, final good to all, he could not righteously or mercifully sustain such a world.

Mr. Jackson is a very superior man. I am sincerely grieved at his infirmity, and sometimes ask myself how I could bear it. But tell me how the hard and flinty soil matures the delicious berry, or how in the dark caverns of the sea there bloom the colors of the mother-of-pearl, and tell how the spirit of man is nourished, with all divine powers of life and being, amid the anguish of sharp adversity. We talk much about good circumstances, but Heaven only knows what circumstances are good.

I am more and more pleased with what seems to be the felicity of your situation, morally, socially, and materially. You appear to have caught the spirit of our vocation, and day by day to be feeling its influence.

It is a good vocation, and affords great opportunities to live the life of a man, engaged with the finest objects of study, thought, and action.

I went to hear Mrs. Norton sing last night: took Mrs. Ward, Kate, and Nora. She sang very finely, and appeared with quiet propriety. I wondered, as I sat and looked and heard, how a woman who had been through so much disappointment in her affections could sing so appreciatively those ballads that praise, and die for, human constancy. No disappointment, no anguish, no bitter humiliation, no dreary way of loneliness and neglect could cast a doubt on the great ideals of purity and devotion. It is a testimony to the survival of great and illustrious sentiments in the midst of earthly ruins, and of a light that beams on the heart, above all broken hopes.

Your experience in writing sermons revives my own. Take simple themes — one thing, and stick to it, I would write short sermons — twenty minutes, or five more sometimes, is enough, and best. Your experience in calling interests me. I have found it best for me to use the mornings in the study, and the afternoons in pastoral duties. I never have liked calling all day. An average of two calls a day will carry you around often enough, I should think. What conduces to useful work more than anything else is to get so settled, with duties laid out, that one can work easily and with-

out worry. Then good eating and sleeping, rest before eating, if one is tired, and rising in the morning with pure taste are great accessories to pleasant work; then constant communion with a poetic mind, and some new intelligence gained every day. The mind becomes happy in study then.

You went to see Dr. Hedge! I am glad you did. Nothing is more common than to see the reserved manners of reflective men interpreted to mean *hauteur* and severity of bearing. It is a good piece of manners to know how to meet such men with complete self-possession, on the same plane of mind with themselves. Young persons, and persons who at any and every age live chiefly in the outposts of the mind and not in the citadel, usually think that reflective men are proud or unsympathizing. It is a great mistake. The difference is that some are always melted down and flowing; others, like silver, must be melted down before they flow. Dr. Hedge has always been a reserved man, and he lacks that genial ardor that gives one a pleasant and cordial introduction, but he has the elements of intellectual and moral greatness. I hope you were not embarrassed in his presence: but if you were, it would not hurt you in his estimation or in your own, or in mine. Many persons think I am a stern man. I suppose that I make that impression sometimes in my more reflective moods; and then again, the only way to shake off some talking fool, rescue your own soul

from the pit, is to draw into your shell and cease to report.

I am sure the occasion to see and hear Mr. Brooks must have been helpful and instructive. A wise and liberal mind, open and receptive, is always ready to be taught from every source of truth and good. The individual, alone and uninstructed by the experience and sympathies of others, is a sterile type of human nature. I would like to have you tell me more definitely the impressions you received from his presence and preaching. As I have told you, I have always felt that much of his influence is *presence;* not merely in avoirdupois, but in that fine indescribable halo of moral and spiritual life which belongs to all in whom the high truth of spiritual being is personated.

Have you read "The Control of the Tropics" by Kidd, an interesting essay? He says white men can live there only as a diver can live under water. A writer in the *Spectator*, not in controversy, says that they can. Jordan says that they can live there, but instead of improving the people they will sink to the level of the natives. Science is a little "too previous" in the matter of races. The world hasn't been going long enough to determine some things. The dew is on the grass yet, and the sun isn't above the trees on the eastern mountains.

I am quite unable to understand the turkey kind of

life of the wandering here and there, and through the grass and bushes, leaving the children, now the other side of the fence, and now in the ditch.

I see so many broken-winged birds, so many whose affairs are piled in a heap of ruin, and some who have lost what little moral substance they ever had, that I am often pained for the sorrows of the world, and refuge is found only in vigilant duty and in the consciousness of the upright mind. When we reflect that much of the trouble of men is brought on by themselves, we are impressed with the conviction that little can be done without a modification of character, or recharging of the will. My error, I think, has been that I am too impressible and given to pity, when a wise severity would have been more true. To be truly wise and kind is a union of sentiment and truth which we may look for only in the Almighty.

(After hearing General Booth.) It is a platitude to say "They will do much good"; but it is in a field and by methods quite off my plane. I can give it only that general moral sympathy which I feel toward fetichism and all that sensuous form of religion which characterizes the undeveloped man. The common mind must have religion painted in tawdry colors. I am only glad there is some one to paint it.

The flash of war streams up from beyond the hori-

zon [1898] and gives a lurid gleam across the sky. I feel deeply its import and possible result. In such a time one wants to have a clear idea, at least to himself, of the cause and purpose of a conflict in some respects new to us, and perhaps destined to modify the relations of the nations of the world. The cause of the war is the inefficiency and cruelty displayed by an ancient monarchy in the government of the colony of Cuba, near our shores. All just sentiments demand that such *un*-government with its attendant miseries should cease. Christendom agrees in that, whatever the allied powers of Europe through jealousy of one another failed to do in Armenia. It is becoming in a great nation to put an end to what seems to be ceaseless bloodshed and misrule. This is our cause, as I understand it. There are many blunders in diplomacy, and statesmen do not believe one another, and war carries with it all the motives of human action, mendacity, selfishness, ambition, honor, patriotism, and liberty. But mixed with all these passions and principles there is an idea of justice and right, that gives import and meaning to war, and it has an awful morality amid all its crimes and suffering.

Whatever our Government has failed to do through diplomacy is a part of diplomacy itself, its fraud, cunning, duplicity, and passionate will. I see no reason to believe that war would have been averted if diplomacy had been continued. A decaying monarchy lay across the path of justice and right; collision was inevitable

unless the world ceased to move. We are at war with Spain! A great war estimated by dimension or idea, time or consequence.

What will be the result? No man knows. The contingencies are very great. Our business is to say, and compel, that a government so weak that it can be only cruel shall let go. If we say and do that, our duty is done, and all honorable sentiments give applause. Will Cuba have peace then? Perhaps not, but she will be working out her own problem, and will have as good as she is able and worthy to have, with no meddling from abroad.

But I am no prophet, and it is not becoming in any man to assume to understand the future. I can conceive contingencies that may carry the war into foreign lands, and involve the Anglo-Saxon race, and arraign the European civilization at the bar of modern judgment, but it is just as easy to conceive that it will not be so. Wise men and fools alike prophesied that our Civil War would be over in ninety days. It lasted four years, and culminated in an act of righteous humanity of which they never dreamed. That war *ended* in humanity. This war *begins* in humanity. Maybe this war will illustrate as truly as that how little men know to what a principle, the only eternal thing on earth, will lead. Anyhow, I hope for swift and heavy blows, quickly to bring the end.

War has many issues and outcomes that were not contemplated or indicated in the original pronuncia-

mento, and a complete change of mind may come over a nation as war advances, developing new conditions and raising new questions. I do not know that I have an opinion satisfactory even to myself, in regard to a policy that may lead to indefinite territorial aggrandizement, but the views of those who rest on traditional immemorial usage, the Constitution, George Washington, do not convince me. The growth of our country, the expansion of its power, the extinction of slavery, have all come in spite of the rigid frame of the Constitution, according to spirit, elasticity, and spring that recasts the setting and framework of nations and the world. The idea of nations remaining as they are, with fixed boundaries and limited domain, is contrary to all experience of history or human progress. There is a self-correcting process in the very constitution of nature informed with living power. I will not agree in this or that about the present war, but express my conviction that it will put us in new and more vital relations with nations, readjust the distribution of the world.

September 7, 1898

This is very much such a morning as that of September 7, 1864, when we came into the harbor through a gray mist that obscured the town. The period between then and now is a considerable portion of a man's life, and gives opportunity for retrospect and prospect. My experiences have been as satisfactory,

perhaps, as the experience of men commonly is anywhere. I have, on the whole, led a life of self-respecting independence, and rendered some honorable service. I am not anxious for the future, and have no desire for posthumous eulogy; while to be beloved and remembered by those who are nearest me is my humble but divine ambition. I confess, with gratitude, that the longer I live, the more deeply am I impressed by the grandeur of the world scene, and the more ardently do I contemplate the fortune and destiny of Humanity. While human nature is ever the same, there are great eras of human progress, when man seems more receptive of the Divine Spirit and the world gets a fresh impulse from on high, attesting that man is never deserted by the Maker, and that immortality alone is the theater on which the Eternal Mind can work out the infinite designs of good.

August 1, 1899

Horatio has just come in to bid me good-morning! His heart is as strong as the sun, and his mind as clear as the sky. His going awakes the sentiments I felt when you left me for Cambridge, when every pain was soothed by gratitude. What you say about Williams [Theodore C.] gives me great pleasure. He is a *man*, a scholar, and a gentleman, and his spiritual mind is not infested with the owls and bats that flutter in the dark of much believing. Give him and Mrs. Williams my salutations, when you see them, and tell them that

I distinguish them from others by a kind of cheerful glory around their heads.

As for myself, I am about as well, I suppose, as I can expect to be, and, while my strength is diminished, I enjoy much and feel many sources of wisdom, gratitude, and love, of which your mind and heart are perennial fountains.

CHAPTER IX

SAYINGS AND EXTRACTS

[Dr. Stebbins habitually made use of clear-cut, epigrammatic sayings, which condensed a philosophy into a sentence. The present chapter includes some of these characteristic condensed statements, as well as a few extracts from addresses or sermons.]

LIFE

The guides of life are not demonstrations, but opinions, judgments, probabilities, faith.

True greatness always and everywhere is a great spirit, and the power that moves a great spirit is the heart.

The exercise of generous and unselfish affections is the only true happiness on earth or in heaven.

We want to feel and know, not how God made the world or why he made it, but that our hearts, our consciences, our imaginations are in sympathy with his will and love.

Virtue is positive; vice is negative. We often miss the attainment of real excellence, because we think it consists simply in getting away from our sins.

The eternal reason for doing right is because it is right; any other reason, such as getting hurt or going to hell,

is a sneaking apology, and has no relation to morality, pure and true.

There is no heresy but the heresy of not believing in duty, virtue, excellence, and love. These alone are universal as human nature and belong to every human being as an endowment from heaven, and have the same native glow in all fashions of the tribes of the world.

We cannot think of the enormous trial which is undergone in the world by vast multitudes, without the thought of some sublime fruit to come of it some day. It may not emerge from the struggle of bare endurance here, but has not the seed been sown?

I would live as though there were no such thing in this world as death for me or for others. I would live with my thoughts amid things that endure; in work and duty and love, until death itself is consumed in life, the resurrection going on day by day, the mortal putting on immortality.

The eternal foundations are sentiments: Honor, Shame, Patriotism, Reverence, Love of Beauty, Justice, Goodness, Conscience. These have no time or season, and suffer no mutations of uncertainty or doubt.

It has been said that we dig our graves in our youth; but a sadder thing is a low-toned dull maturity that

has no resurrection power, and holds to life from mere animal instincts. The only thing that can help us is a new resolve by which the breath of heaven may fill our sails, and bring us out of the wretched doldrums of a soul delayed in the senses, into the wide sea and free winds of a new life. If we can carry our self-reproach, accepting willingly its burden, knowing that we are not estranged from the love and forgiveness of God, there is great hope for us.

All our past that is precious must be brought into the present as living force, and all our past that is mistake, or folly, or sin, must be left behind. We are here — our work is here — our duty is here — our being is here — and here is the kingdom of God. Don't look back after it; forward is the course!

While we do all in our power to remove temptation from the weak, we should always teach, and nail the truth on every height of moral glory, that temptation is not only an opportunity to vice, but also an opportunity to virtue.

As the glad light of day comes invariably with the returning sun, so peace and joy and the divine love and benediction always come with our return to truth and duty, however far we may have wandered from it.

Wherever on the earth stand the monuments of human struggle, self-sacrifice, and devotion, there it is good for the living, as they move forward in ever-flowing pro-

cession of generations, to pause in their march and pay venerating respect, gratitude, and admiration.

God forbid that I should decry learning, refinement, intellectual culture, in any form in which these adorn human life with beauty, luxury, and power; but these are not supreme, and they are not the climax of individual greatness, or of the nation's glory. What we want as individuals, what society wants, is not so much increased intellectual force as awakened moral sensibility.

THE USES OF LIFE

To him who looks upon the world aright, life is desirable, if only for discipline. When Job was surrounded by afflictions of the severest kind, he exclaimed: "I would not live alway"; but modern writers have exclaimed, "I ask not to stay," as if the duties of life were a loathsome task which to be discharged from would be "unspeakable gain." What Christian would not, with the ancient patriarch, exclaim, "I would not live alway"; yet who would say, "I ask not to stay"? I would ask to stay. I would live a long life; I would live for virtuous discipline, to do good, to alleviate suffering humanity, to raise the immortal mind by communion with the truth and with God; to practice the principles of love and good-will which the Saviour of men taught; to contemplate the character of God in his works; to enjoy communion with friends,

and to visit the graves of those whose memory and parting blessings are yet fresh in the mind. I would hear the thunder as it rolls through the heavens as the voice of God, and behold the gathering cloud as it rises in terrific grandeur, the chariot of the Almighty. I would see the mighty forest tree bend with graceful meekness before the tempest, and when the storm is over see it stand firm and towering upwards, and learn the lesson from it, that virtue, though meek, is firm and unrelenting. I would hear the tiny shout of the little child, as he runs to meet his father returning from the toils of the day. I would see him wrapt in sweet slumbers, with the smile playing on his lips. In the mountain waterfall, in the delicate lily which blooms in the vale, and in the rippling rill that murmurs by the cottage of content with music sweeter far than that of the fair daughters of Italy, in the flying cloud, I would learn a lesson of life. In all these I would learn the character of God. Are these not worth living for? They are worth a lifetime, however checkered that life may be with temptation and evil; and in the proportion by which we overcome wrong, our lives will be valuable. I would live long for this. The joys of heaven are worth a lifetime of preparation, and he who disciplines most will be the best prepared for that enjoyment. I would live then until the silvery locks of virtuous old age should be an emblem of fitness for the society of heaven. To him who has spent a life like this, the tomb is stripped of its terrors;

the chills of death are as the smiles of God's countenance.

My time has come. It is best that I should go. I have loved you all; love me still. Remember me with gentle sorrow and cheerful gratitude. We have loved one another, and how happy have we been in that love. What may we not expect from the infinite love?

AGE

Age has a life, a plan of thought and feeling, rather than a field of action. It is divided between remembrance and hope; experience has become transformed to wisdom; and the heart of the child, the hope of the youth, and the strength of the man, have all and each contributed their finest quality to these summits of existence, which the light of parting day tinges with supernal glory. The finest quality of life is in age, when thought, remembrance, and hope, reflection and imagination, gathering up all the materials of life, crown our earthly experience with eternal power and beauty.

IMMORTALITY

We never consider man and his material frame identical. Our idea of him is something superior to the body. The life of the body is held subject to a higher life in our very conception of duty. Conscience overrides the natural instincts, but man never completely succeeds on earth in doing what the spirit wills. Virtue is never

completely realized. What a host of unused abilities and what feeble attainments! Shall not another term and a longer date perfect the fruit which the days of the world are too short to ripen? The climax of all our thought is that men believe in immortality, and the proof of it is that faith in it that realizes it. Mankind in all ages have had a hope of perpetual life, a fond expectation. Has he endowed his offspring with such a sentiment and expectation only that they may see their nature at last a lie? Is this holy and triumphant suggestion of our nature false? Impeach not the Author of our frame by affirming that he has put a fact or a faculty into our being which has no corresponding truth. Amid much weakness, confusion, and tears, beneath these great persuasions of our being, man's spirit still affirms that the grief of unsatisfied desire is his grandeur, and discontent with the limitations of the present is a promise of immortality. I know of no testimonies, presumptions, evidences, in the whole range of man's moral experience and history, equal to those which proclaim his immortality.

I trust that every one who believes in immortality, believes that he will meet again with those who have been most dear to him on earth. I have sometimes felt that I would not make another friend, if all that I could enjoy of him were confined to this earth. I need, in this susceptibility to friendship, in this power and tendency to multiply the bonds of spiritual kindred

and affinity, the assurance that we are laying up treasures for our heavenly life, providing friends that shall be ours forever. Let us feel, then, that we lose nothing and risk nothing by our friendships that sometimes seem brief and fruitless; and when the thought of some dear friend, long unseen, and perhaps never to be seen again on earth, comes over us with almost painful vividness, let it be as a gentle wind upon the harp of prophecy, let memory merge in hope, and let our minds and hearts and imaginations turn for their satisfaction to that dwelling-place of God where within

> Bright gates inscribed, no more to part,
> Soul springs to soul, and heart unites to heart.

HEAVEN

HEAVEN cannot possibly be anything to us except as the culminating and idealizing of what we honestly care most for here, and hell cannot possibly be anything to us except the culminating and idealizing of what we dread and hate. Here reason and faith, always hand in hand, unite in a purely moral and spiritual conception of the world to come.

LOVE

THE essential, elementary, fundamental item of faith is the insight and conviction that this love, that is from God, and is the divine inspiration of our souls, is the same as that ceaseless growth of good that shall van-

quish and subdue the evil that is in the world. This was that vision of Jesus that outstrips science, and sees truth in eternal light as it is in God, and lovers of humanity, teachers, philanthropists, philosophers, may expect the realization of their hopes and their faith from the increase of this love alone.

Social science is good by pointing out measures and methods by which love may work, but all true and living reform springs from a radical and substantial growth of human nature in moral life; that is, from an increase of love.

If man loved man, as God loves the world, what wrongs would be abolished, what selfishness and sin would be extinguished, what corporate and individual wickedness would be dissipated, what clouds of war would be swept from the heavens, and what graces and charities, and lovely affections without pedantry or calculation would readjust the politics of the earth and change the climates of the world!

HATRED

HATRED of evil is no measure or statement of excellence and never can be. Love of good is, and ever shall be.

Doubtless there are things to be hated. But hatred of anything is no positive good, but a mere negative quality, and square leagues of it could never make a garden-plot where one flower could grow.

To hate evil, to see imperfection without idea of the perfect whole, means nothing but one's own imperfection, and testifies to a degraded will rather than to a pure affection.

In respect of the world and the part we act in it, we do most good when we pursue the good and let the evil alone. That is, the most efficient method of abolishing any evil is to overcome it with good. We hate evil more than we love good. This is why we rarely appreciate things we do not like.

HONOR

True honor is the conscious rectitude of the soul, in harmony with God and itself. It is a law of its own beyond laws — incarnate rectitude, the ideal morality. It is more and greater than honesty, as faithfulness is greater than duty; as faithfulness overflows duty, so honor overflows honesty. This is the meaning and spirit of it as I understand it now; as it has come down to us through ages of changing, increasing morality.

Honor! The glory of the mind, the glory of God! It is a world splendor, a divine glory, a manhood greatness! It illumines the earth. It shines through history, and men and nations behold it, the terrible beauty of God!

SELF-REPROACH

There must be no uneasy self-reproach for what has taken place, no backward-looking as if we could have

shunned this or that under which we are suffering. True, there is hardly any event in the Divine Providence in which there is not a commingling of human agency, and there is often a sharp and painful thought, "Had I only done otherwise all this might not have been." The only question is, Had you right purposes? Did you do the best you knew? If not, then penitence and contrition become you before submission, and you shall bear bravely what you suffer as the adequate, kind, severe, yet healing retribution of wrong-doing. But if your conscience is clear, if what you regret came by no fault of your own, then it is yours trustfully to submit, and joyfully to hope. True, had you known what you now know, you would have done differently; but you did not know. You could not have known. Yours is not the gift of prophecy. Had you this gift, it would indeed seem a powerful protection, but it would prevent too much. It would shut out the very dews and rains and sun and wind of this great experience of earthly frailty and uncertainty.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

THERE are laws of thought: and reasoned truth, that knows no fortuitous luck and no blind gropings of chance and passion, is the only worthy achievement of the mind. Intellectual development is not merely an individual development, but a common sense of truth and right reason in the common mind. It is the increase of order, law, causes, and consequence in the

mind of an age. Freedom of thought has no existence, except when based on intellectual development, such as this. On any other grounds free thought is in the intellectual world what free love is in the sensual world. Without the rectitude of the intellect, thinking is itself a vagary, and truth is a caprice of self-will. To be intellectually honest is the last accomplishment of a mind that moves without passion or prejudice in the happy rhythm of truth, simply seeking to know what is. Intellectual honesty is much more rare than moral honesty.

PROPERTY

PROPERTY is a great ethic and spiritual education of man. It is a provision of the Maker for our welfare. It is not your own in the sense of an irresponsible selfishness. It is an opportunity, and God will call you to account for it. When ownership shall not merely ask, "Is it not lawful for me to do as I will with mine own?" but will search for wisdom and truth and goodness to guide and transform selfishness to moral glory, then man will dwell with man as with a brother, and free political institutions shall not be defaced by the hideous contrasts of social condition.

EXPERIMENT AND EXPERIENCE

RELIGION rests on the certainty of principle. There is no experiment in it; there is no reason for any suspicion that it will not work well. It is a plain, estab-

lished, eternal thing. It is not found out or formed out by experiment, but by experience. It is human excellence. It is good everywhere. It is not dependent on locality, or climate, or season of the year. A man runs no more risk in living under its law than in breathing the air or loving his child. It is good for his mind and heart, as the blood is for his body. It is not a medicine: it is health itself. It is simple, plain goodness. There is no man to whom it would not be good to improve his temper, purify his feeling and conscience, and give generous and cheerful hopes. There is no man whom it will not improve and bless, and help to do or bear whatever may be appointed to him in human lot. There is no experiment here, but the experience of man is the guarantee against all venture or risk. The claim of religion upon us is not that it asks us to try an experiment, but to enter upon the experience of eternal verity.

BEING

THE reason for your being is that you *are* a being; and the end and purpose of it are that you may be more and more and more what you are, even unto the glory that is God's glory.

Those that have the purest joy know that happiness is not the end of being, and comes not from seeking or following, but flows from the glad heights of a soul that in itself is blessed.

O experience! costly jewel! indefinable substance! mysterious thing! extract of existence! sum of life's toils, and aroma of life's agonies! compound of earth and heaven! Experience! Man's thought, hope, feeling, joy, and pain distilled through the sands of God's wisdom.

My own consciousness of untrained faculties and undeveloped powers is so vivid, and what I am is so feeble compared with what I might have been, that not only my life, but my being seems sometimes a failure. Yet I am not moping or melancholy. Neither am I weeping over an unretrieved past. My being and my doing go forward into the great future where I trust more abundant life will find more abundant calling.

Not having or doing is our chief attainment. Being is our great possession. This is the crowning expression of human life.

Aspire, and you shall rise. Do your first duty, and the next will appear, and your will and your deed shall be one.

No man who withholds himself from active and sympathizing association with the poor can keep the fountains of his own nature flowing with that generous moral health that belongs to a good and wise heart.

To live in dreams or visions is sickly. To go into a cloister and meditate on eternity is morbid. To lose

our interest in the present world in thinking about another is morbid. The highest condition is that in which with all hearty energy one lives in the present with his life drawn from the past and the future.

It is not longer time that we want so much as the capacious soul to flow through the little we have.

ON OVERCOMING

If anything in nature is clearly intended, it is that arrangement of our moral constitution by which it is so hard to be anything, so hard to keep a steady direction upward of all our powers. Amid what continuing besetting difficulties do we domesticate a virtue, so that it will stay with us as a gentle habit! How many times, over and over, must it be acted through pure power of will. Those genialities which come without this labor give little strength of character. The character which has overcome the most obstacles in its formation is the best and strongest, and what profound respect do we feel toward one who has started with a fund of inborn ungenial qualities and by little and little brought in sunshine and joy! Are these labors to dishearten men, or is it not through them that men feel the majesty of virtue and the greatness of obligation? How does it happen that the more we overcome, the more we love the fight? Why does patient, quiet acceptance of any difficulty, though it pillows us upon a stone, always send us divine assur-

ance and strength? So wondrous is the education of life, so vast the discipline of the soul!

GOD

THE most sublime conception of which the human mind is capable is that of an infinite personality whose will pervades the universe; the source of law that moves in consentaneous procession in all realms, from cause to effect; the source of power that unfolds the petals of a rose, and draws back the earth from its aphelion; the source of love that warms the heart of a child, and kindles the flame of angelic aspiration. The idea transcends all others, and is an apprehension, not a comprehension; an insight of pure reason, not a conclusion of the logical understanding.

Say what we will, let theology do its best, and let science have full scope, and let all the evidence be brought into line in bristling array, yet nothing so persuades us of the great realities of moral and spiritual being as the man in whom God is manifest, the type of our human nature at its best, and the faith that God in humanity is the sublime revelation of himself.

To be brought to God's judgment is to be brought to a discernment of the truth in regard to ourselves.

There is a vast over-balance of mercy over wrath. Let us trust that. Let us think nobly, triumphantly, of

God, and be sure that trust in a righteous God means the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

The conviction, the feeling, the faith, whatever you call it, that however knowingly men may look upon this world and see nothing but society — all solid mass — yet to God the world is all individual; that conviction alone can sustain our hope, and plume our wings to fly lightly across the moral abysses of the world.

Let us think nobly, triumphantly of God: and be sure that trust in a righteous God means the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

The tenderest men of all are the severest with themselves. They know how to pity who know how to repent.

BELIEF

THE beliefs which Jesus taught are of the same nature and kind as those which good men have in one another. The teachings of Jesus were not to make propositions, but to bring men into communion with God.

Belief is not faith, and no amount of belief is faith. Faith is a personal, inward knowledge that we are spiritual beings, that a divine life belongs to us as the vocation of our nature, and that we are in relation with other spiritual beings, our fellow-man and with God, the source of all being. Faith does not consist in

a belief in spiritual existence, neither is it to be confounded with the acceptance of any statement in words. It is not assent to propositions. It is the sense of a living and supreme authority in the man of the heart. It is a state of spiritual health and vitality of soul that discerns the living powers of spiritual being and responds to their signals.

Faith in its true and pure sense is not toward things or propositions of the understanding, but toward spiritual beings and a spiritual order above the dark powers that confront and contradict us here. Belief may be a purely intellectual state touching no active emotion; but faith worketh by love. It is of the very essence of it that it lives and moves and has its being, in, and for, and toward those in whom its trust is, its objects of worship, its models of duty, its springs of satisfaction, the living God, and the living imprint of God in humanity.

It seems to me that if a man would be square with himself, square with the world and square with God, he must rest in some great truths, stated in large, free, and indefinite form. There are some things of our most profound conviction which, if we strive to give them more definite conception, either vanish or involve us in confusion. The moment that religion is fixed in dogma, that moment the dogma begins to dissolve. Humanity and divinity are of the same quality and nature, as father and son. Jesus is the historic witness

of the height to which human nature has attained, and the eternal figure toward which the church of God, or human society, is to grow, "till we all come into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

To believe is to realize the invisible. To believe is to see with the soul, as nature sees with the body. To believe is to realize God as the source of our being and all spiritual illumination, and the goal of destiny. To believe is to discern and live in a world above and beyond and within this world, whose least interests are more important than this world's greatest, whose one day is as a thousand years to the whole duration of the earth. To believe is to see what humanity did become in Jesus of Nazareth, and to see in him, in whom God's glory was so manifest, the possibility of one's self, and of his fellow-man. It is to believe that humanity, through that glory that cometh from the only God, may become thoroughly divine. Believing is to see and feel that discipline teaching education, that mystery that we call moral influence, is as real to man as the beams of the sun or the revolving earth. Believing is to discern, by the insight of the soul, that a fine and pure conscience, reflecting in terribleness and beauty the distinction of right and wrong, is as real as the mountains in the horizon or the sea rolling in the Almighty's hand! Believing is to see, with the eye behind the eye, that the mind of a child, with all its

tender buds of thought and feeling and imagination, is as real as a bank-account, a wide area of land, or the choicest breeds of cattle: and is as much superior to them as the stars of heaven are to a beggar's staff! Believing is to see that man's heart, and woman's love, and childhood beauty reflect a light that is not on land or sea: the light that is the glory that cometh from the only God!

THE CHURCH

THE office of the Christian Church, as I understand it, is to stimulate personal character and life to moral and spiritual excellence, and to cherish those revering sentiments toward God in which all excellence at last has its root. It is not primarily to engage the soul in the work of its own salvation, but to engage it rather in a free, abounding human life. Progressive apprehension of spiritual truth, the nature of man, duty, and destiny, is the keynote of human welfare. To have an idea of the meaning of this world and to respect it, to study its wants and apply the principles of righteousness and human charity to life and experience, and to find the kingdom of heaven in the helpful and hopeful conditions of earthly existence, in short, to befriend whatever is human, this is the office of a Christian Church. It is not the office of the church to reflect public opinion, like the press, but to show the pattern forever in the mount, and that moral and spiritual ideals are the glory of the world.

If the church survives, it will be because she is inspired and guided by the spirit of truth that will lead her to all truth; and all truth is unity, not of opinion, but of heart and will.

THE CREEDS

The truth is that this whole system of doctrine misconceives the moral order of the world. To call belief in it faith is as great a blunder as to call bookkeeping astronomy. Faith is not a belief at all expressed in intellectual form; it is a free motion of man's moral nature in trust and love toward God, the Father of all; and to confound it with dogmatic statements of any sort is a confusion of thought and idea. The kind of celestial certainty with which the creed speaks is intellectual impudence, as compared with those moral and spiritual sentiments which are the very heart of religion.

The world is in the making, and its ruins and disappointments and defeats are not a relapse from a former glory, but a part of that "process of the suns" which is a method of almighty wisdom and love. This fronts us with God, our ideal is before us, and destiny is a glory to be won in the future, and not a lost paradise to be retrieved from the past.

CHRISTIANITY

It is the purpose of Christianity to purify and consecrate human nature.

Christianity is as old as creation. Its truth is in human nature, supremely expressed in selected souls, among whom Jesus is chief. He voices human nature in clear accents of truth and love, snatches of a celestial song, the glories and harmonies of a moral world. In this transcendent expression of the truth that is universal as man, he has purified the hearts of men, changed their thoughts of God, and given a moral impulse to speed the race on toward its ultimate goal, through regions where old truths take new shapes, and new circumstances call for new actions. This is the eternal Gospel, in the heart of God when he laid the foundations of the world, and in the heart of man when God made him a living soul.

Christianity, a revised edition of human nature, takes the world as it finds it, as it is and not as it ought to be, and proposes, through eternal principles of righteousness and truth, to refine, exalt, and bless human-kind. This, in its fullest and most comprehensive scope, is what we mean by human progress, or, in that completest phrase that ever fell from lips touched with heavenly fire, the kingdom of God.

Christianity, as it exists in the common opinion and life of Christendom, is, doubtless, *a religion*, but as it was in the mind, heart, and life of Jesus, it is *Religion*. The universal and human quality is the glory of it, and it is that which raises Jesus above the level of the mere teacher and makes him the practical and ideal deliverer

of the world. If we have this conception of him and his truth, we shall go to him for the impulse, and power, and elevation of human life, rather than to trace the lines of a religious system. The most profound and authoritative account of his purpose and aim is in his own words: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." This is Resurrection: an enlarged capacity of moral and spiritual life; as it is also the test of any genuine likeness to him. This test would bisect the sects, exclude many stout believers, give heretics a place in the eternal kingdom, and make Christianity as wide as the world. Then we shall be able to reconcile intellectual difficulties by acknowledging the oneness of all excellence and the oneness of the religious life.

RELIGION

Religion is the recognition of the divinity in all things and creatures, animate and inanimate, and of the relations of the personal soul to the personal God.

Religion assures us with tender and entreating voice that God is ever near, doing all that wisdom and love can do, within the limits of our nature and circumstances, to lift us out of our difficulties, to repair our misfortunes, to console our griefs, and to make up in the most tender manner for our sorrows and struggles.

Religion is not a profession; it is in human nature and life, the law and love of our being, as gravitation is in

earth and star, and as light goes forth upon land and sea. We have only to lay hold upon that law and love within, and our being becomes real to us. We are satisfied that, though life has many illusions, life itself is no deception, that we are spiritual beings of kindred nature with God, and that, if these great sentiments sway our hearts, illume our reasons, and inspire our action, we have, by the grace of God, vested rights and blessings in immortality.

The idea that there can ever be any unity of religion, save in that unity of variety in which every individual is sacred in his experiences before God, is fantastic. No two human experiences can be alike, and, though the world seems to a finite mind all solid, to an infinite mind it is all personal, and we must have done with dogma as a test of character or thought, and accept a reverent heart and upright mind as the final test and last word.

Finite beings like ourselves must come sometime, somewhere, to something they do not know, and religion offers the most reasonable satisfaction in the thought that what finite beings cannot fathom is not necessarily unfathomable. Religion spans the chasm between the finite and the infinite by the method of trust and love in and for a being of intelligence and goodness above our own. Reason justifies our confidence, and faith makes an easy flight across the abyss.

As science suggests will, so religion suggests love.

The primal interest of religion is with the individual, through the inspiring power of personality. It is forever the "fifty righteous in the city" that saves the city. Let all secular movements go on, to relieve the stress of circumstances; the real source of energy is found in personal character, in the actual excellence and virtue that radiate from high and pure lives. No more vague and senseless notion ever possessed an honest but ignorant mind than the notion that the machinery of things will do the world's noblest work. All excellence, all renovating powers are finally vested in persons, and there can be nothing in a nation or a state, or a city, however exalted its aims, or however perfectly organized, which is not in the persons composing the city, the state, or the nation. An ultimate standard of worth is an ideal of personal worth. All our inspirations, all our visions of eternal beauty are visions, remembered glances of persons, or some ineffable glory of Him, all good. To speak of any progress or improvement or development of a nation, or society, or mankind, except as relative to some greater worth of persons, is to use words without meaning.

This moral and spiritual fact is the basis of religion, and of institutions for worship, prayer, and teaching. Man's nature overlaps this outward scenery of life and experience, and there are capacities in the human spirit not realizable in any conditions that we can

conceive on earth. Our faith in that Infinite Person, like ourselves, though infinitely above us, is justified by gleams of suggestion that a life, lived here under conditions of limitation that thwart its full development, shall be continued in a society where the complete measure of our capacities shall be attained.

To this end is religion and its institutions — to set in operation moral agencies, not through the impersonal machinery of society, but by the presence and contact of good men and good women in the city, the state, or the nation. To this end every true teacher and preacher of religion is born, and to this end he comes into the world: to be the interpreter of human life in its sublime relations and terrible glories. This is my thought, my view, my conviction.

THE LIBERAL

The liberal in religion has a glimpse of universality, and as the climates of the world enfold the earth and sea, so the spirit of God enfolds the world of man. There is no infallibility for man. He is guided by opinions, judgments, probabilities, faith, hope, and love, great, general, all-comprehensive truth which, if you would define too accurately or appreciate too exclusively, vanishes and spurns the thrall. I rest in those great general beliefs, opinions, and ideas of God, man, eternal righteousness, and human destiny that give sublimity, grandeur, and hope to human life.

Justified by his own moral being and spiritual consciousness as the interpreter of life in the light of religion, he must move fearlessly on that shadowy twilight border-ground between matter and mind, and stand in the verge of the abyss between law and will, force and person, which science cannot bridge, keeping open communication between the human and the divine, confident that when the *me* of conscious moral being and the *not-me* of things meet as sheeted ghosts, and sword cuts sword in viewless air, no Damascus blade of polished physical fact can ever win.

The consummate spiritual man conceives the human world as no accomplished fact or concluded tragedy, but as the field of divine operation, where the ever-working, inspiring God prefigures in human souls on earth the glory and power of that life and society where men shall receive more abundant measures of God's eternal spirit. All the activities of life sooner or later follow the fortunes of the mind. The friend and teacher of men must have some insight into the supreme motives of human nature and of those powers of reason, imagination, and faith that cannot rest in the known, but stream into the unknown as the early day-beams stream into the darkness of the night. He must interpret human life in the light of these. He must voice them in his own personality, and in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, as the supreme figure and expression of human nature in its divine relations.

ON WAR

WHILE we wait this great fulfillment [the realization of the vision of universal peace], what is the ground and standing of war in the providence of the world? Has it a place in the progress of mankind, or any part in that world-system by which education of the race has been carried on through the graduated steps of an imperfect morality? Neither the moment nor the propriety of the occasion permit the discussion of so wide and profound a theme. I shall be happy, indeed, if to your awakened minds I can give the seed and kernel of it. Mankind is divided into individuals, families, and nations. Each of these is a moral unit or whole, endowed with the powers and passions of humanity. On a large scale, nations make the grand divisions of the human world, while individuals are smaller parts of the greater whole. The individual is a moral unit, and the nation is a moral unit. Therefore, disputes may arise between nations and between individuals. In the one case they are settled by law; in the other case, they are settled by war. Why this striking contrast? Why are the misunderstandings and contradictions of individuals settled peacefully according to the intelligence and reason of the present, while the misunderstandings and contradictions of nations are settled by methods that are a thousand years back in a barbarous and cruel age?

The contrast is thus striking because there is a law

for individuals while there is no law for nations. The individual submits to the opinion of society: he must submit, for the same power lies sleeping behind a court which is awake and abroad in war. No government of nations can thus compel the obedience of nations. Even if international law should rise to such a height of power as to become the public opinion of mankind, a nation that refused to consent to that opinion could be compelled to consent only by war, just as the law can be executed only by force against the individual who refuses to submit. So long as any nation refuses to act upon any other sense of justice than its own, war is not an accident of society, but something rooted in the very constitution and progress of the world.

This is a dark fact: but it is a fact, nevertheless, and one that plays a conspicuous part in the history of the world. However we may deplore it and look forward heroically, in the name of reason and of God, the inspirer of reason, for the coming of the millennial age, this is the condition of man to-day.

But this is not all despair! The Almighty Maker has prepared the cloud by day and the fire by night, the eternal ideals that lead his people on. War, with all its terrible features, has its own solemn and august virtues. The idea of the soldier's life and destiny is to die for the good of others. He sinks into the abyss that the nation, with all its peaceful and happy homes, its teeming populations, its shining capitols of law, art, letters, and religion, may breathe the air and glance in

the light of heaven. He is the instrument of ideas above himself that bind him with supreme and subtle force, giving a background of moral grandeur to the dark perspective of grief and glory.

There *is* something worse than war: it is the misery of having nothing worth fighting for.

(Spoken at the Chit-Chat Club dinner, 1887.)

UNITARIANISM

In these declining days of a venerable form of faith, when many things are remembered that were once believed by the true and the good, "but remembered with a smile as belonging to the past," it has been asked if we Unitarians have any further duty or vocation. The question misconceives the nature of truth in assuming that religion is a settled fact, and not a moving spirit; that now we have come to the mount of transfiguration and we will build three tabernacles and appropriate the divine glory to private use. It is the old weakness for concluded fact before the spirit of truth has come, unmindful that the ever-flowing fountains of religion are in the mountain fastness of Reason and the Moral Consciousness, and only superficial and short-breathed powers try to appropriate it as their own. It misconceives the idea of our time, inasmuch as it forgets that there is no longer any such thing as external authority in religion, and that the appeal to the inner convictions of the soul is the only divine credential. To say that men who have believed

this and proclaimed this, have now no vocation, is simply falling back into the old rut of belief that religion is once more finished and we are going to have an easy time; whereas religion, in view of the ever-increasing complexity of life, has now a harder task laid on it than ever before. To give spiritual help to men, it must be spiritual, and no longer think to win the soul by storming the senses, or to shirk its own responsibility as a teacher under cover of a textbook. If any man thinks that Unitarianism is to be the formulated faith of the future, he knows not the spirit that he is of: and if, in this time, when religion must come forth and ask no favors of the world or men, and seek no protection, but take its place with reason and divine philosophy, any man asks if Unitarianism has lost its vocation, surely the spirit of truth has not come to him. The concluded fact, the finished truth, still haunts him, and no glories of the advancing God.

(National Conference, Saratoga, 1884.)

Unitarianism is not a dogmatic form of religion, but a way of thinking that corresponds with reason, common sense, and the great facts of man's experience. The protest that it makes against dogmatic Protestantism is of the same kind as that which Protestantism makes against dogmatic Rome. Unitarians are a small body among the sects of Christendom, as Christendom is a small body compared with the human race, but Unitarianism, as a way of thinking,

has an influence far beyond its numbers. Poetry is imbued with it, literature bears it on wings of power, and science proclaims it. The late Dean Stanley said that he did not hear a sermon in America that was not imbued with the spirit of Channing and Emerson. Religious reform is the slowest of all to move, but as sure as day and night the Christian Religion is about to be placed on a basis of reasonable fact — physical, moral, spiritual. The appeal to ignorance and fear, and dread of mysterious consequences, will give place to appeals to honor, the sense of justice, the latent affection for truth and goodness, the beauty and holiness of God, and the loveliness and wisdom of Jesus. Religion will drop its melancholy and austere tones, and commend itself by its sympathy with what is hopeful, joyous, and trusting, and be guide, cheerer, and inspirer. It will recover its half-lost respect for literature, poetry, and art, and find genius, philosophy, and science its true allies. Before such powers majorities are nothing. Those who think the thought and hope the hope of mankind hail the day-spring from on high and live in the morning of the world; and man comes of a nobler spirit as he learns to gauge his opinions and his actions by a scale commensurate with his nature. The world is young, and the path of humanity is wet with dew. The vision is plain, that he who runs may read. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it surely will come; it will not tarry.

THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF A MINISTER

The office and duty of a Minister is to unfold the principles of moral and spiritual truth, to awaken the sentiments and affections of the heart, and lift up those ideals that ever draw the wondering eyes to the mountain-tops that lie between this and a hidden world. Above the dust and grime of earth, above all wickedness, he must be in love with man and men. He must understand the world, yet be not of it. He must see the good, the beautiful, the true, as in eternal light:

> As when a painter, poring on a face,
> Divinely through all hindrance finds the man
> Behind it and so paints, his face,
> The shape and color of a mind and life,
> Lives for his children, ever at its best and fullest.

Thus there is gladness in his heart, with something of the patient resignation of sorrow. He must have sympathy without softness, that can seize any opportunity to give pleasure, or establish peace and comfort in a troubled mind, or soothe a penitent heart with healthy pain. The more he is a man, the more he is of God. At home with human experience, he often knows without knowing, and is wisest when not wise at all. He is no pietist and no professor of religion after the style of the professor's chair, as if religion itself were a specialty. He is man, and, through conscience, reason, and imagination, illumined by studies, cherished by prayers, and enriched by human love, he ascends by

easy steps to heights of spiritual being, where the light of God forever dwells. The nature of moral and spiritual influences is silent and unseen, yet all the glory of man's estate is there, and the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven lies folded in the human heart.

A minister, first of all, should be a man who likes this world, believes in it and loves it, is of the world, and yet above it. He should love human nature — believe in it and hope in it. In short, he should be thoroughly human in all his thought and feeling. He should have common sense, good learning, delight in literature, a reverent mind, without pietism or sentimentality, and that mysterious power that has never been defined, that we call *character*, which, at any rate, is nothing more than alliance with God. A man thus equipped is well furnished for some of the finest and most enduring influences of human life, and to such an one there is something in life that gives it a profound, glad, and solemn joy — something greater than happiness, more sublime than pleasure, strong as the sun, and steady as a star. A man who is equipped with reason, intelligence, and love, without which intelligence is only moonlight, observes the world from celestial heights of strength and light. A good man knows the world much better than a bad man can know it. A man's influence with his fellow-men depends, in the long run, on the powers and qualities to which he appeals; and while he does not ignore tact, skill, or wisdom, his

real influence that is worth anything depends on his appeal, in action, life, and speech, to the best there is in men. I take every man at his best. I would awake his noblest powers. I would think of him at his best, and I have found that, whenever you so speak or act in public or private toward a man, you get a response; for the moment, at least, he is a better man, and is awakened, it may be in surprise that there is something in him of reason and love that had slept so long. This is idealizing the real, and showing how our human nature may be swept by heavenly breezes as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind. I have found that human nature in its great leading outlines is the same, while individuals differ as the leaves of the trees or the flowers of the field. Every man must take himself for better or for worse, to have and to hold, to do the best with himself that he can. I recognize and feel the unknown good there is in the world, and the supreme summits of human excellence in individual hearts. I know as much of human wickedness as the heart can bear, and I know as much of the supreme heights of moral and spiritual beauty. To these heights I ever look and cheer my heart with celestial visions.

ON EDUCATION

THE aim of education should be those powers of moral and intellectual nature which make one denizen of a universe founded in intelligence and truth. Man cannot live on equal terms with nature; high aristocratic

blood flows in his veins, and he feels that he was born to good estate. As he beholds the signatures of intelligence and law in the universe around him, and feels the motion of kindred powers within him, a mysterious unrest possesses him, until he moves in the realm of those powers and finds his home above nature in the kingdom of intellectual life. Education is the acknowledgment of this resplendent truth, and school and college and university stand as signals that man comes to his manhood, not as the animal comes to the complete development of his life, but by culture and receptivity.

Education, then, is putting man in possession of his better powers, and in communion with humanity and Providence. What ought an educated man to know, to think, and to be? These are the three terms of his existence as a man, and without these he has no proper life as a man. Knowing may be said to be the power of seizing any fact or thing, defining its boundaries and distinguishing it from all other things or facts; hence a man does not know anything until he can define it, or, rather, anything that he knows he can define, and the common sayings, "I know but cannot tell," "I have the idea but cannot express it," are loose fallacies of speech. The prime importance of intellectual acquirement is that a man may distinguish between his knowledge and his ignorance. Inasmuch as all knowledge is not within his grasp, it is of first rate, even indispensable, importance, that he should have a chart of the

unknown regions and be able to map out the *terra incognita* of the mind.

The days of universal scholarship are gone, never to return. Aristotle may be supposed to have known all that was known in his time; but the times have changed. The vast incursions of science and philosophy into the world of matter and mind, the golden chain of literature running through all ages and fastened in the skies, are too boundless for exploration within the limits allotted to the life of man on earth. The field is so wide, of such varied beauty and vast wealth, that every man is compelled to some specialty of intellectual vocation. To wish to be a universal scholar at the present day is equivalent to that ambitious aspiration for universality in mechanism, whose defeated hopes are summed up in the old adage, "Jack at all trades, good for none."

Therefore, an educated man is compelled to decide for himself what he will know. With us Americans that question is practically settled by vocation, and, whatever calling a man may choose as the field of his active powers, let him know the central things of his vocation to the extent to which they are known. Let them stand clear in his thought, in their outline and boundaries, distinct from everything else in heaven, on earth, or in the water under the earth. No man is an educated man who has not brought his knowing and discriminating powers to this tension. It not only makes him master in his chosen vocation, but it brings

a certain tone of mind which is test of everything, a kind of common sense or mother wit which the mind takes on when it is put in hearty *rapport* with truth. This is why the dryest studies, when vanquished to intelligence, bud and blossom, and memory and imagination dwell forever. Knowing something, and knowing it to the bottom, is the only condition of salvation from the ill-ventilated habitation of a narrow mind. Specializing tends to narrow thought and bigotry of feeling, unless it is offset by strong impressions of the unknown regions and refreshed by winds from afar. The man that knows one thing can never be superficial, though he must have superficial knowledge. That one thing holds about the same place in his intellectual life that backbone holds in character. The end is indwelling, salient power, which is at home on its wings. An educated man, then, ought to know something so thoroughly that its boundaries are clear in his mind as the rim of the firmament, and at one sweep of his eye to take in the limitations of his own knowledge and distinguish that which he knows from that which he does not know. Thus, while he has much superficial knowledge, he is not a superficial man, and while he is compelled to a specialty of thought and action, he will not be narrow-minded.

What ought an educated man to think? I am confronted at the outset with this fact, namely, that the exercise of some of the greatest powers and privileges of humanity is a matter of ability not less than of duty

and right. If I were to answer the question in view of this fact, I should reply: Every educated man should think as much as he can; that is, he should be able to set himself free from the tumults of sect or party, from passion, prejudice, and public opinion, and think for himself according to the best lights he can find. He should have courage enough not to fear the results of such thinking; he should believe that, whatever it comes to, it cannot be so hurtful as dull acquiescence in what is commonly accepted. To think and believe with majorities, to accept tradition and custom, and imitate society and the world, require only the common faculties of an ape; and the ape can do it without spending four years at college.

Young men: The man who thinks at all does thinking for himself; nothing else deserves the name. The man who, having no affinity for the truth, mistaking the flame of a zealot for the eternal light, or a cloud of prejudice for a heavenly signal, who knows not conscience from self-will and goes fumbling through the universe to make out a foregone conclusion, is the standing reproach of education as he is also of human nature! Whereas the man whose soul is in love with moral beauty; who sees truth as a thing that hath its glory in itself, and cannot be touched; who trusts himself in the simplicity of meekness to his own soul and the God that inspires him, and feels that the angels have charge over him lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone; who desires only to stand face to face

with what is and knows that one truth cannot contradict another; who is so full of courage that he knows no fear, and so full of moral and intellectual love that fear knows not him; who thinks into the open space of truth around him with freedom and joy and reverence; — that man is the guide and hope of men, elect and precious, king and priest unto God. To such freedom and courage, truth itself invites and inspires us, and we have it on the authority of him who is the truth, "If the truth shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

> No bar the spirit world hath ever borne —
> It is thy thought is shut, thy heart is dead:
> Up! scholar, bathe unwearied and unworn
> Thine earthly breast in morning's beams of red.

What ought an educated man to be? What final result should come to pass in him? I reply first and midst and last: He should be more and more a man according to the advantages he has enjoyed of putting himself in communion with the life of humanity. The man who is educated has simply received more from the life of the world than other men. The experience of mankind, as expressed in literature, history, science, philosophy, has been tributary to him; he has received more of the life of humanity, and surely he ought to be more human, as the prime result of his privilege. He ought to be five men in the delicacy of his perceptions and in the breadth of his sympathies. Instead of taking advantage of his fellow-men by the

superiority of his attainments, he ought to be all the more their minister and benefactor. Instead of boasting that he is *of* the people and has risen by force of his own faculty, it should be his pride and joy that he is not merely *of* the people, but that he is *for* the people — not their flatterer, not their cajoler, but their believing counselor and friend, who will always be true to himself and true to them. The educated man should be as much more a man than other men as he has been receptive of the life of mankind. If his education does not augment all his human powers, for what cause has his education been? Let him be careful how he diverts from this augmented manhood in any of the petty channels of immediate influence. Let him beware how he runs into any specialty of thought or action; let him pursue his vocation; let him do what is required to be done, but, whatever he is and whatever he does, let him be and do with the whole breadth of his human nature, however office or the conventionalisms of society may support his abilities or augment his influence. Office can do something to increase his authority for good; position may give him vantage-ground of power, but his chief reliance must be that he is a man among men. Whatever he is in particular, his manhood should be greater than that particular. He must *be* something more than all he knows or thinks or does. There must be an ever-increasing momentum of life and conscious being in him. Let him not think to find any goal in which to rest. Let

him not be politician, lawyer, preacher, engineer, philanthropist, temperance man, or abolitionist; let him not be Freemason, Oddfellow, or church member, but while he acts and thinks in these, let him *be* greater than them all. Although a man may stand on the balances with the weights in his pocket, there is a notch in which he goes, and his true avoirdupois, no more and no less, is in his manhood. When you have told a man to be a man, can you add anything to that counsel? Are not all the powers of the universe tributary to that? Were they not made and inspired, even unto this end?

(From "Why Do We Cherish the University?" 1868.)

CHAPTER X

PRAYERS

[The prayers of Horatio Stebbins were uttered with unquestioned sincerity and earnestness from the depths of a loving, reverent heart. Prayer was not a prescribed form, but the outflowing of his inmost soul in communion with the All-Father. In 1889 his son Roderick, without Dr. Stebbins's knowledge, engaged a stenographic reporter, who sent him, for nearly a year, reports of the prayers of the Sunday services. After Dr. Stebbins's death, they were published as a precious memorial of his ministry. The fire of 1906 destroyed a large part of the edition and put the book out of print. A few of the prayers are therefore included in this volume.]

O Infinite and Holy One, Almighty Providence of our lives, inspirer of our souls, the beginning of reason and the end of faith, we implore thee now by thy gracious spirit to come nigh unto thine own, and lead forth thy flock in green pastures beside the still waters of divine grace. "We were glad when our companions said to us, Let us go up into the house of the Lord." We are come in the gentle light of day; the sun shines bright and fair; our lives are blessed and our hearts are inspired by thy gracious spirit. We come as we are,

with all our earthly burdens; we come as we are, with all our earthly joys, with all the hopes that thy spirit has kindled in our breasts, thou knowing us better than we know ourselves — our inward thoughts, our veriest purpose, our desires, our pain, our will, all known to thee. Pity our weakness; enlighten our darkness; confirm our feeble strength by thy own might; and let thy children rise up and sit down and lift up their voices in gracious benediction and praise and blessing to thee, our God.

O Holy One, Infinite Father, we invoke thy blessing on us always. Renew in our hearts our sense of dependence on thee, our sense of filial trust in thee. Consecrate unto us all our experience; what is dark do thou illume in thy time; what is a deep trial, or pain, or anguish of any sort, do thou relieve and assuage; and gently bless with tender and holy consolations and reverent feelings of how little we know of thy ways, the mystery of thy providences, the teachings and the wonders of thy grace.

Almighty God, we thank thee for our daily affairs; for our constant occupations; for that which we find within our own dwellings, and in the world of men to occupy our minds, our hearts, and our hands. Give prosperity to our honorable industry, to our intelligent service; and in doing good, in walking humbly, and in loving mercy, may we find the abundant reward and peace of thy divine kingdom.

Almighty God, our Father, we would fix our minds

and thoughts on thee now. We would think what thou art in thine ineffable beauty and perfectness; and we would feel that thou hast inspired us with a nature kindred to thine own, and called us to the great calling to be sons of God. May our minds be inspired and filled with reverence and devout feeling and holy purpose of obedience and trust in thee; and as we stand upon the great eminence — the great eminence of our Mount Zion, the city of our God — and look abroad over all the earthly scene of our experience,— its mystery, its trial, its abundant salvation, its kindness, its times of distress,— may we see in it all and through all a wondrous leading, a divine hand, a holy and protecting care.

Let thy blessing, Holy Father, be upon all to-day, as wide as the beams of the sun. Let thy gracious benediction be shed abroad. Guide with thy strong and merciful hand; keep by thy pure spirit; and save all by thy eternal grace. Hear our prayer; forgive our sins, and remove them from us as far as east is from the west. As our earthly experience increases, may that experience stretch over into unknown worlds, into untried scenes; and may divine wonder and curiosity enamour our hearts of what God has yet to reveal to his children. Amen.

The day is bright and fair, the world is filled with the glory of the sun; thy spirit, O God, goes forth inspiring the hearts of all thy children, and we come, beckoned

by divine signals, led on by holy hands, with our feelings drawn toward thee, to our place of prayer. Come to thy people as thou ever dost and hast done from all time; come to us as to thy own, and give thy people peace. Forgive our sins; subdue our minds to patience, to penitence, to prayer; lift up our hearts in holy gratitude with exultation of soul and bowing down and worship, and rising up before thee with awe and gladness and terrible reverence and comfort at thy goodness, by thee manifested to thy children.

We always thank thee, Almighty One; we always bless thee, thou infinite and eternal God; and with holy patience and penitence and prayer we lift up our hearts to thee now. Let thy benediction be upon the homes we have left for an hour to come to this, our house of God. Consecrate them, consecrate this. Wherever our thoughts, flying on wings of imagination and love, rest down upon those whom we would bless with thy blessing, there let thy love go inspiring, and thy almighty hand sustaining, comforting, and supporting. Let thy tender benediction be upon all thy suffering ones. Deal kindly with the wretched, the poor, the weak, the wicked, the wise, the good, the true. Thou knowest, Almighty One, our wants; thou knowest and thou canst supply them by thy spirit and by thy grace and thy power. Subdue our hearts to thee. Teach us wisdom by thy divine grace and spirit. Lead us in plain paths of duty and consecrate to our minds and hearts our daily work. As we go

forth at any hour of the day, in the morning, at midday or evening, may the rising of a new life, the satisfaction of midday strength, the tender thoughts of the evening glories, fill our hearts with the divine presence and holy companionship of God in heaven. Amen.

Holy Father, Almighty One, hear the prayers of thy children now, and come to thine own with blessing and peace. We reverence thee and bow down in awe and holy fear; we lift up our voice in devout song and praise and prayer. Pity our weakness, help our ignorance, heal our doubts and our wounds of mind and heart, and give thy people everlasting peace and trust and comfort and love. If any of thy people are in heavy trial, if they are alone in Gethsemane, be with them there with thy power and spirit, and lift them up and save them forever and ever; and if the cup may not pass from them, may they be enabled to say from hearts enriched by obedience and faith, "Not my will but thine be done."

We rejoice, Almighty God, in the themes of thy eternal truth, that truth which thou hast set in the nature of man, in the world around us, in the work of thy hands; and hast illustrated by the lives of prophets and martyrs and saints, and by thy Son Jesus Christ. We thank thee that that truth, rising upon the world, never sets; that it knows no eclipse of its increasing glory, but stands higher and higher until its beams shall illumine the whole world.

Confer upon us, O thou Almighty Spirit, the spirit of truth, the love of what is, the joy of thy commandments, the beauty of thy love, and let us in our daily lives, with simplicity of heart and purity of thought, seek to know thee, to know our own being, our inmost purpose; and may our thoughts and purpose be alike consecrated to thee.

Let thy blessing be in every heart of man; let it be in every human dwelling, resting down in holy peace upon little children, upon youth, upon mature manhood, and upon the aged in years, and let all thy children be blessed in thee, their Father in heaven. Amen.

O God, our Father, Infinite and Holy One, thou whose word is spoken in all places of thy dominion and the uttermost parts of the world; thou whose law goes forth to hold the worlds in their places and in whose hand the ocean rolls; thou hast proclaimed thy word and thy truth to the children of men; thou hast set thy Son Jesus Christ to confirm that word, to establish and to keep it forever and ever.

We adore thy greatness; we bow in humble reverence before it, and we lean with filial trust upon thy paternal arm. Owning the presence of thy inspiring spirit in all those great sentiments of the human heart which have struggled on in the darkest periods of man's trial and ignorance and sin, we thank thee that somehow through the wicket gate of death we see a

heavenly light. We thank thee, owning the influence of thy everlasting spirit, for that faith by which thine humble children are gone up from earth as the sea ascends in mists. They have gone up with humble hope, with humble trust, that somewhere and somehow they would be nearer thee, their Maker, and feel thy paternal arm. In times of darkness and ignorance and sin we thank thee that this great hope has struggled on in the human soul.

We thank thee, Almighty One, in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, that thou hast confirmed the heart of man and strengthened his hope and comforted his spirit; that thou hast given to him thy Son to abolish death, to bring life and immortality to light through his gospel and to establish thy eternal kingdom and that infinite communion of earth and heaven. Let this spirit and this faith be upon all thy people to-day, on every land and clime and race and tongue; and in whatever humble ways men worship thee, O God, hear their prayers, strengthen their hearts, confirm their hopes, and lead them forth to everlasting life.

We ask thy blessing upon us now, and receive, we pray thee, our humble prayers, our penitent confessions; and lift up thy people forever and ever. Let the blessing of the truth of the gospel of thy Son be in all our dwellings. Let it be in all our hearts, blessing, consoling, lifting up, and comforting amidst trials or perplexities or joy or gladness, forever and ever. Amen.

Again we come in the evening hour to this our place of prayer. Again we lift up our heart and voice to thee and commend ourselves and all those who are dear to us to thy holy providence, thy paternal and ever friendly care.

The pleasant day is gone. Evening shadows are falling around the dwellings of man, and thy care and thy watching are over all. We adore thy providence; we wonder at thy works, the marvelous works thou art doing and hast been doing from when time began until now; and the experience of human life, renewed in the hearts of every generation, repeated in our hearts and lives, the leading of thy providence, the monitions of thy spirit, the direction of thy will — all these fill our hearts with a revering adoration, and we look forward and around us, and upward, and we gain new and divine suggestions and hints of our being and our destiny.

We thank thee for all the records of thy providence in the world of men, for the testimony which the great and the good, the illustrious exemplars of mankind give of their confidence and their trust when guided by thy almighty hand. We thank thee for the story of the childhood of man; for thy care of him, for thy watching over him, for the adaptation of thy teaching to his mind and heart, and for thy guidance by thy spirit and thy Son.

Let a reverent mind, we pray thee, let a devout temper and disposition, penetrate our hearts. Dismiss

from our minds all conceit of knowledge. Now may reason and faith and affection, pure feeling and pure thoughts, guide us, inspire us, and keep us in perfect peace.

Almighty God, we ask thy blessing upon all those whom we think of when we think of the human ties that bind us; we remember our fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and neighbors and friends of to-day. For every feature of human life and experience, for every joy and grace, for every pain we bear, we give thee revering gratitude, and we invoke on us daily thine eternal good-will.

Let thy blessing be upon every human dwelling, on every human heart; chastise, reprove, lead by thy hand, lift up, restore, and strengthen, and let all thy children be blessed in thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XI [1]

THAT WHICH REMAINETH

A CONFERENCE SERMON

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh... whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken... that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. (Hebrews 12: 25, 26, 27.)

THE style of Asiatic grandeur in which things moral and spiritual are set forth in the New Testament requires to be toned down a little to meet the severer and more logical mind of the modern time. The Oriental mind is huge, and is fond of cloudy magnificence, gigantic splendors, and world-on-fire catastrophes. Nature is awful and overwhelming in Asia, and a great writer has said that if Europe had been projected on the scale of terribleness of the Whang Ho or the Hindu Kush, the modern civilization could not have been. However that may be, Asia, the homestead of mankind, was fit place for the childhood of humanity, and the birthplace of religions.

[1] Few sermons or addresses of Dr. Stebbins have ever appeared in print. He steadfastly refused to allow the publication of a volume, and only occasionally yielded to request that a sermon should be published. The sermon of the Saratoga Convention in 1884 has been widely read, and several addresses printed by the Channing Auxiliary are treasured by their owners. Restricted to the choice of sermons already printed, I take one that was preached at the dedication of the Unitarian Church in Berkeley, California, November 20, 1898.

The mountainous and smoky style of the writer that I have quoted would have been modified by a kind of human common sense if he had been a delegate to the Pan-Anglican Convention or the Methodist Conference of the modern time. He would have said, "Many things that once seemed firm have passed away, and they have passed away that the eternal things may abide unshaken."

On an occasion like this, gathered as we are to take grateful and reverent note of the completion of a simple building devoted to worship, prayer, and teaching, it is becoming in us, amid the shifting scenery of religious thought, which to some minds is cause of doubt and alarm, but to others the dawn of a new day, to consider what has been shaken, and what remains unshaken. I invoke the aid of that Almighty Spirit that giveth us understanding that I may inquire with reverence and love concerning the deep things of God revealed in the history of humanity. I will unfold no panoramic scene or world-view, but be content if I may flash a light here and there along the horizon that o'erflows the urns of eternal splendor.

I suppose there is no danger that man will ever lose sight of God; that Almighty Being whose power gives law to suns and stars, and whose spirit in man reveals the awful glories of right and wrong. The only change there can be is in man's idea of him. That there have been great changes there can be no doubt, from age to age, and from generation to generation. Many things

that were thought to be permanent have proved to be transient, as man has been educated by the graduated steps of an imperfect morality. The idea, the thought that men have of God, depends on the time, the age, and I might add, on the temperament of men. Abraham and Isaiah, David and Whittier! Wesley said that Whitfield's God was *his* devil! But amid all this change and passing away, the idea of God remains an everlasting possession to the mind and heart of man. Hawthorne says, "The reason why the mass of men fear God, and at bottom dislike him, is because they distrust his heart." The great change that has come is that humanity and divinity are the same in quality, differing only in degree. The great transformation is the spiritual humanization of God, the idea that reason, conscience, affection in us are the true interpreters of him, and that the smallest particle of truth, or right, or love here on earth, is of the same nature with the eternal reason and the eternal love. A God whom we suspect of being ill-tempered and self-willed is no God, only an idol, a bad imagination of ignorance and passion. If we attribute to him, or allow to be attributed to him, characteristics unworthy of man, characteristics that are incompatible with reason and love, our belief is only the belief of a Samson bully, and not the belief of the sons of God. The idea of God permanantly survives, and the being that we can permanently worship is a God of love, the most sublime conception of which the mind and heart of man are

capable. And when we say that God is love, we know what we mean. It is the best of all that can be expressed in action or character. It flings a heavenly glory on every human sense, and, like the angel in Abou Ben Adhem's dream, fills the dusty corners of our earthly dwelling with celestial light. We have our true life only in love. Call to mind those who have had the sweetest influences — they are those whose presence shone on you as a light not on sea or land, and warmed your heart to surprising powers of excellence and beauty, and you wished that you were altogether as they, who filled the simplest word or deed with eternal kindness. For this, science, learning, wit, and wisdom uncover their heads and stand in holy awe. Around this the universe of worlds and souls revolves, God-centered in eternal hope. Let all things else be shaken, this that cannot be shaken remains.

There is a book that is reverently regarded as the special repository and record of God's word and providence, through the ages of his care for human-kind. It is a book made of many books bound in one, to unite and unify the divine teaching from age to age. Written by different men at different times, widely separated, it seems a kind of autobiography of human nature jotted down in happy moments, of personal experience in all the simplicity of personal consciousness. The first wondering impressions of the newcomer just arrived on this earth; the hardened heart and daring crimes of the long resident here, forgetting that

the world was not his, and he only a tenant at will; the recalled and penitent spirit awakened by the voice of Christ, when to the world, dead in custom, he brought back the living presence of God, and to the first reverence added love. All this, and more, is written there, in happy moments of inspiration such as have fallen upon the ensamples and leaders of our race during the lapse of centuries. The land and country of the book is a well-chosen spot, a kind of watch-tower, from which men can overlook the history of the world. A bit of mountainous land in the southwest corner of Asia, across which merchants, shepherds, and Arabs guided their caravans, pitched their tents, or hid in mountain dens. India, Babylon, Jerusalem, Egypt, all are spread out beneath the imagination of one who would see the panorama moved by the finger of Providence.

This book has taken such a hold on a portion of the human race as no other book has ever done. All the best books of Christendom are born of the thoughts and ideas of this book, coming from a nation despised in ancient and modern times. It is read at the hour or day in millions of places on the earth, and a hundred times a year in each place. It is a presence, and when men unaccustomed read or hear it read, they wonder as the patriarch did when he awoke from his stony pillow and exclaimed, "God was in this place and I knew it not." The book tells of God and his Son.

A book that has such influence over men ought to be

regarded reverently and carefully. We ought to expect something from it as we do from Shakespeare and Milton. We read them expecting to find great things; and the Bible read so would reveal great universal testimony of things human and divine. It is a kind of natural inheritance into which we are born.

But while this state of mind is proper, legitimate, indispensable, indeed, to a just appreciation of the Bible, it is not a complete opinion. We must apply our intelligence and reason to these writings as we would to all great writings. They are the work of different minds through a period of a thousand years. Nothing human is infallible. Infallibility belongs only to the Infinite mind that moves in the rhythm of Almighty power and love. The same liberal studies that unfold the meaning of all history must be bestowed upon the Bible. When Niebuhr's history of Rome appeared, Arnold of Rugby said that, when studies like Niebuhr's were directed to the Bible, we should understand it much better. I cannot touch the question of inspiration — that is a theme by itself. The Bible, when liberal studies have done their work, will be regarded as one of the providential records of the education of the race. It is the book of human nature from childhood to maturity. Myth, fable, parable, and miracle are there, and the speech of humanity in its loftiest moods of virtue and prayer. The natural history of the soul is there written for all mankind. It justifies itself to the mind of a child, and

to the conscience of a man. It tells stories of childhood wonders and utters truth profound as human nature and perpetual as time.

The Bible is not an infallible book. Some, thinking so, have taken the book instead of God. It is history, literature, law, and religion. It is to be read, studied, and reasoned about so. There is much in it from which we gain little, there is much in it from which all things of eternal worth may be won. There is much in it that is not true, but truth burns there unconsumed from age to age. Historic truth is not the only truth; a fact that is not historically true may yet be true on a higher plane than that of history; true to eternal reason, to moral and religious sentiment — and human need. A fact means nothing until it is penetrated with thought, and transmuted from gross substance into idea. The story of Belshazzar's feast may not be history, but the idea of fallen greatness is an eternal admonition to all the votaries of pride and power, as Shakespeare puts it in the mouth of Wolsey in the modern time:

> Had I but served my God with half the zeal
> I served my king, he would not in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies.

The story of Christ's temptation, the scientific critics tell us, is not literal historic fact. Let it be so. The story is none the less true, but a great deal more so, when the narrative which embodies the inner truth and experience of a human soul is conceived as myth

than when understood as matter-of-fact history. The idea of the myth, the terrible idea that God has placed us here in the midst of temptation, from which the Son of Man was not exempt; *that* is the truth which concerns us far more than the rude outline of devilish wit sitting on the pinnacle of the temple or climbing a mountain with nothing to eat. Idea is what illumines the mind, not fact recorded in the mythopeic age. Again, the story of Jesus and the fig tree. That has no idea, and was probably put there by some interliner. We have no hesitation in saying that it is not true that Jesus was angry at a fig tree because it had no fruit — and that out of season. If we know anything in the light of truth and reason, we know that this could not be true of Jesus. Thus we study reverently, enlightened by beams of eternal light, and follow the track of truth through centuries, as moonbeams on midnight waters. Let liberal studies, higher and lower, let science bring all the methods of nature to shake the earth of ancient opinion, and remove the things that are shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Out of the Bible, before science was born, there were strange doctrines of the will of God built up with massive logic, and dark mountainous power, as the guides of human conduct, and the sure prophecy of human destiny. Never was a man on earth so resolute to tear out and destroy all that was false, so resolute to establish what was true, and to make truth, to the very last

fiber of it, the rule of practical life, as John Calvin. He could ride all day in the valley of the Rhine and see not a thing of beauty. John Calvin is dead, and his doctrines of God and man are his winding-sheet. Walk reverently and look upon that face, and lay a leaf of holly, or myrtle, or immortelles on his bier. As far as the state of knowledge permitted, he laid the foundation and reared the walls of the most terrible system ever devised by man. The strong angel has spoken — earth and heaven are shaken that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Silent influences have been working on the common mind, not only through religion directly, but through literature. Whatever is humanizing, whatever reveals a sympathy between the human and divine, gives the keynote of the human world, and reveals the heart of God. Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Carlyle, Emerson, have made manhood the standard of virtue. The great transition of thought is from theology to humanity. Jesus said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." If we believe in God we must believe in ourselves — that we are spiritual beings of like nature with him. And if we have this great belief in God and ourselves, we shall not go amiss amid many doctrines, and while many things are shaken, that which cannot be shaken will endure. We need to minimize our beliefs, and weigh them rather than count them. To know too much is a sign of a sterile mind. We should cherish a wise agnosticism. We live by apprehension more than

by comprehension. A poet has said: "Things proved are not worth proving." All our great beliefs are daring assumptions; they were not reasoned into us, and they cannot be reasoned out of us. It is the promise of our own nature that gives us hold on things eternal. Every man is convinced of his own being, though he may not have reflected on it to learn what it implies. But its chief attributes are so obvious that, when once attention has been called to them, they cannot fail to be discussed and recognized. These attributes, call them what you will — reason, conscience, faith, love, or individuality, self-consciousness, free will — give us rank as children of God, the great distinction between creatures and beings. A great writer has said: "What the thing is, which we call ourselves, we know not. It may be true. I for one care not that the descent of our mortal bodies may be traced through an ascending series to some glutinous organism on the rocks of the primeval ocean. It is nothing to me that the maker of me has been pleased to construct the perishable frame which I call my body. It is *mine*, but it is not *me*. The intellectual spirit we believe to be incompatible, something that has been engendered in us from another source."

The spiritual mind is angelic — strong in insight and emotion. The spiritual man, not the pietist or creed-monger, is he whose intellectual and moral powers are raised to a point of vision and action, whence he discerns the unity of law without, and the

unity of law within; whose mind, free of superstition and degrading fears, is at home in the world, and, beholding on every hand tokens of good, finds happiness in duty, and, without anxiety or fear, trusts himself to that goodness of which his own upright will and pure heart are the promise and the pledge.

May the sublime truths, drawn from the Being of God and the nature of man, be taught here, with prayer and song, and illustrated in the moral beauty of daily life.

CHAPTER XII [1]

THE SON OF MAN IN HIS DAY

A SERMON

When he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. (Luke 17: 20–24.)

THE friends of God have great cause for gratitude and joy in the ever-renewed tokens that his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and that his truth endureth to all generations. There have been times of distress when God's people looked with fear and trembling lest he had become weary or his heart had failed. But from age to age a light gleams from one part under heaven, even unto the other part under heaven, and God seems nearer and nearer his beloved race, while man's heart and woman's tears win new victories of the soul.

Is there a God in history? Is there a Providence in the life of mankind? The ancient prophet had a vision of it through the rifted clouds of wonder and mystery, when humanity was young. The prophet conceived

[1] The sermon in this chapter was printed by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in London in August, 1893.

humanity in the relation of a child to his parent: the child's image is formed on the retina of the father's eye, and the father caresses him, the little man of his eye, and loves him for the tie of kindred blood and the beauty of his being.

Another prophet and apostle conceives humanity not in infancy, but in childhood, led by the pedagogue to school — the young scholar brought to the master by the father's servant, who guided and urged on the boy, carried his satchel, and saw him safe at the door, where the teacher received him to the hospitalities of a larger mind. "The law was our pedagogue to bring us to Christ" — a conception of the provisional and progressive character of divine guidance, culminating at length in the fullness of light and life, when God shall be all in all.

Yet another, brooding over the mighty theme of God's ways, ascends the ages and æons, and catches a glimpse of the eternal method, which in our day is the sublime generalization of the patient love and judicial mind of science:

> My frame was not hidden from Thee,
> When I was made in secret,
> And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
> Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance,
> And in thy book were all my members written,
> Which day by day were fashioned,
> When as yet there was none of them.

Prophetic vision, spiritual genius, is ever seeing new

worlds beyond the western horizon, and the setting sun of to-day is the dawn of to-morrow; while to the simply practical mind the present is a finality, the world is finished. God has fulfilled the contract he made with man: the work is done. Yet we hear much of progress. The air is full. It is with us wherever we go, importuning us for attention, admiration, or wonder. Progress in the material world is in the market-place — a thing of length and breadth and thickness, that can be bought at a price. It comes home to our comfort, refinement, or luxury. No man in his senses will speak lightly of man's conquest over nature, as we call it, nor affect the conceit of indifference to the wonderful works of the hands and the brains of the children of men. Nor will he deny, but gratefully confess, the indirect influence of these upon morals and religion. There is a sense in which material comfort sweetens life and relieves the hardness of necessity. Though the sufferings of the world may be changed, they are not less, even as the increase of knowledge does not diminish the area of the unknown. So there is no patent right to make virtue and honor easy; nor is the electric light to be confounded with "the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven," and "shineth unto the other part under heaven." There is no essential and eternal relation between righteousness and physical comfort, as there is no essential and eternal relation between the salary of a judge and the judicial mind. In war the science of attack is, in the

long run, matched by the science of defense, and dynamite is as good for an anarchist to tear a town into human agonies, as it is for an engineer to compel the sullen rocks or make the proud mountain bellow with pain. The conductor of a street-car, unless there is a sparkling gem of honor in his breast, can outwit the spring-punch; and trying to make a man honest, true, and pure by "improvements" is like putting a fox to bed, and teaching him to lay his head on a pillow and sleep like a child.

Of course, it is a mere platitude of the village moralist to say that, if men were inspired with high and pure principles, the world's wrongs would be righted. But that is not what I am saying. Our notions of progress are often vague, and it is good to know what we mean. The world is a unit, and there is One Lawgiver for starry heavens and soul of man. The virtues are many, but virtue is one: ten commandments, but one righteousness. The kingdom of God includes all the incidentals; but the natural center and germ of the world, the idea of progress, is in morals and religion. There the responsible God meets responsible man; and all the conquered powers of nature follow, if haply they may render willing service. The kingdom of God — that kingdom which is the peculiar field of divine powers and operations — has its own methods of still and quiet coming. Its field is the mind of man, where results alone are manifest: the process is concealed. How fares it in this kingdom of God, in which results alone are manifest?

The great truth is now, ever has been, and ever shall be that man is the crown of the world; that the study of his nature and the conditions of his life is the focus of intellectual rays, and the ever-brightening way of all divine ambition. To this end of man's honor and advancement all institutions — science, art, philosophy, and religion — are subordinated. To increase the capacity and refine the quality of human nature and human life, to raise man's powers to a height of vision and action where he discerns the nature and relation of things, sees truth, is not humiliated by ghostly superstition or mean fear, finds perennial fountains of thought and life within himself and the scenes in which he moves, acts amid the egotism of the senses and the impudence of social fallacies, under the guidance of enlightened conscience and responsible will, warmed by the genial beams of human love — this is the kingdom of God within, and the lightning that flashes across the firmament. This goes behind economics, behind social solidarity, to the individual man on his own account, and as the medium of that inspiration that informs and guides the world. To us, in our bulky thought, this world of men often seems all solid; but to an Infinite Mind it is all individual. God inspires this world through individuals, never through crowds or corporations; and he reveals himself only to congenial souls, as they are able to receive the light and love.

We get a hint of this kingdom that comes without

observation, or like a flash of light across the heavens, filling the mind with divine splendor, in the growth and development of a human being. What a distance is traveled from the life of a child to the life of a man! A distance of thought as great as that which divides the age of Pliny and his panthers at the celebration of his friend's wife's funeral and the sweet griefs of a Christian home, where that light that is not on land or sea is quenched to mortal eyes.

Look at the child in his mother's arms or prattling with his toys. He is innocent and lawless — innocent because he has no conception of right and wrong. His will is wild and feline, and he has no more thought of obedience than the cat that he strangles in his unimaginative cruelty. He is a thief, and takes anything he can lay his hands on. His knowledge of cause and effect comes by getting hurt, and he has no idea of nature or of a law of nature more than of a bar of music or of the tides. Reason, conscience, reverence, love, lie folded like buds untouched by the sun.

But see this same creature again, when consciousness and personality have arisen, and distinguished him to himself from the world of things and creatures around. As the ancient lyrist has it, he is but little lower than God, crowned with glory and honor. He has dominion over God's works, and all things are put under his feet. He tills the earth, conquers the sea, finds the law that holds atoms and worlds. Reason assumes sway over the senses, sends out her voice to

far realms of speech and language, and gets reply in mother tongue, then, turning to the world within, finds lineaments of the inspiring God! Well might the modern seer translate into modern phrase what the ancient lyrist sung: "O rich and various man! thou palace of sight and sound, carrying in thy senses the morning and the night and the unfathomable galaxy, in thy brain the geometry of the city of God, in thy heart the power of love and the realms of right and wrong!"

I am not indifferent to the splendors of scientific achievement or to the conquests of man's spiritual nature over the material world. But to me there is no wonder of man's empire over sea or land that so kindles imagination or flashes such streams of light into the future of man's possible destiny as this development of a human soul. That a child should ever become a Plato, a Milton, or a Darwin fills the mind with proud yet humble awe, more than all the grandeurs of the universe, as they sing the song of eternal reason, and more than that sublime patience and skill that gather large masses of facts of the most varied kind, and bring them under the reign of known law.

> Thou gazest on the stars, my soul.
> Ah! gladly would I be on starry
> Sky, with thousand eyes,
> That I might gaze on thee!

What is this marvelous development? What makes this growth, which seems not so much a growth as a

burst of splendor from an unknown sphere? Do we guess backward from fact to principle, and say, Evolution; as in another sphere we guess backward from fact to principle and say, Gravitation? But gravitation and evolution are methods, not causes. Religion and reason, unmindful of method, as science is unmindful of cause, affirm that these are ways of God's working. Gravitation is the universal force — reason and religion call it *will*, diffused through all realms, and of the same nature and kind, whether displayed in the ball tossed from a boy's hand or "in the process of the suns." Gravitation unifies the universe in one Eternal Will. Evolution, in its strictly human sphere, is the unfolding in man of powers which recognize themselves and their own law, and, reading the universe between the lines, find signatures of power like themselves, and, guessing back from fact to principle, affirm God in man, and humanity of the same nature with God. As the force that draws the ball tossed from the boy's hand is the same as that which leads forth the Mazzaroth in their season, so the feeblest bond of right or duty, or sigh or joy of human love, is of the same kind as in the ever-living One. This thought as a divine insight, not as a scientific conclusion, culminated in the mind of Jesus, and makes him a fountain of truth for the education of the world, and gives him the unique and lovely grandeur of Teacher of mankind.

As it was in his day, so it is in the day of the Son of

man forever, with all the children of men,— thought, idea, vision of truth,— that is not here nor there, nor local nor provincial, nor for hell nor for heaven, but human and divine, filling the mind with light, and flashing across the world. All our inspirations come through men who have the insight of the Son of man in his day, who have seen truth as it is in eternal beauty, felt at home in the universe whenever night overtakes them, and at one with the eternal good-will. Thus the consummate personality is the teacher, the medium of celestial fire, the Son of man in his day. His being, his presence, his word, awaken other beings like himself, and reason speaks a universal language, and faith flies on easy wing across the abyss too deep for human thought. This is revelation in its highest and purest sense — the unveiling of truth to human vision, which has been going on from the beginning through saints and seers, and is still going on with the whole human race. It is no climax of time or occasion, no day of the Son of man surprising the world, and men crying, "See here!" "See there!" but the Son of man in his day, diffusing his mind and heart through other minds and hearts kindred to his own, increasing the capacity and refining the quality of human nature and life. The Son of man in his day reveals other men to themselves, finds them in the recesses of their being, shines on their minds with celestial light, and sets their hearts aglow with love. This is the teacher of men, the benefactor of his race, whose flashes of

universal reason and common sense fill the sphere with light, telling men that all the heroism of the world, the greatness of history, and the loveliness of life are in the primal dictates of conscience and the primitive suggestions of the heart, and that the strength of wisdom and experience is in knowing how much we could have known without the experience if we had had the insight to discern and the courage to follow, at first, that which we find true at last. No amount of observation can take the place of insight. "See here!" or "See there!" is the surprise of the provincial mind or the cry of the quack that has got some new compound with which to medicine the credulous world.

Thought, idea, conception, changes the mind, renews the heart, plumes the imagination, and the world and human life and destiny are changed, and knowledge is vitalized by reason. Who cannot call to mind some hint or suggestion that has unlocked his heart, voiced his common sense, and charged his intellect with cheerful courage without which truth was never won? I once knew a youth, a boy, whose heart was moved, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind, by religious thoughts and musings of wonder, love, and fear. The walls of the chambers of destiny, painted in vivid colors, were the dwelling-place of imagination to him. Under the genial shade of an oak at noontide the patient oxen, released from the plough, refreshed their strength with sweet-scented hay, while he lay on the ground, reading from a little

book of sermons by Dewey. The tender pathos, the kindling sympathy, the fine insight, sank into his heart and illumined his mind. The great impression that he got was that the world and life were the scene of moral and spiritual discipline for beings capable of divine society, and that all the scenery, providence, and experience of life are for the teaching of men. The thought gave the boy's heart the keynote of the world. It was like coming up out of a well, and climbing a lovely hillside to view the landscape. The air was pure, the sky was clear, the river flowed gladly to the sea, trees laughed in the wind, and the jingling team threw their heads high, as if their yoke was easy and their burdens light. The Son of man in his day illumined the heavens of a boy's mind, and flashed celestial beams from horizon to horizon. Such as this is teaching, such as this is history — a flash of reason that lets the primal instincts out of the dark and endows them with sight and power and courage of free speech in their own name. Thus every teacher is a Son of man in his day, lightening the heavens of thought and feeling, and kindling the fires of conscience and love on all the heights. The consummate personality is the teacher; and the consummate teacher is the Son of man, the knowing one, the seeing one, the loving one. He knows, as like knows like; he sees with the inner eye, and loves with the human heart. He is rare, more rare, it may be, than great men in other walks of life. And few follow him, it may

be, because of dimness of vision; but those few hear his voice, and see the banner that he waves, and plant it at length on the war-worn walls of the world. Teaching of any kind is only moderately successful, and the teacher knows but little of his influence; but, if he is in love with human nature, he knows that God is in love with him, and that he treads the way by which man becomes immortal. The influence of truth is not clamorous or demonstrative, but

> As sunbeams stream through liberal space,
> And nothing jostle or displace.

We hear much of our age, of its discontents, the dissolving of opinions and creeds. There is doubtless some exposure to melancholy croaking on the one hand and to feeble cant on the other — the cant of progress and the croaking of decline. The chief cause of disturbance is the discordance of religion and knowledge arising in the sublime and world-atoning truth that the more we know of nature, the finer is our conception of the supernatural, and the more we know of man, the better we think of God. The Son of man in his day knows nothing of this disturbance, feels it not. There is no collision between old and new in his creative thought. Let knowledge soar with eye undazzled toward the sun; the Son of man in his day, inspired by reason and sympathy with truth, is greater than knowledge; for he has power to master it, to appropriate it, and make all the past tributary to the present.

He has charge of truth, the common inheritance of humanity and not one jot or one tittle shall fail or be forgotten. He has no conflict with the past, for he sees the truth that is interwoven with error, and his heart is in sympathy with the wisdom of mankind:

> By Heaven! there should not be a seer who left
> The world one doctrine, but I'd task his lore
> And commune with his spirit. All the truth
> Of all the tongues of earth — I'd have them all,
> Had I the powerful spell to raise their ghosts!

The conflict of religion with knowledge in minds that cannot appropriate the knowledge is the center of the disturbance of our time. I had a friend in former years, well tried and faithful, in whom a fine conservative experience and true spirit of enterprise united to make what we call wisdom. He invested freely in coal mines, rich in that illuminating oil that has so transformed the evening hours in the homes of our land. He built ships for freight and wharves for landing and furnaces for purifying fires. In a night the mountains of Pennsylvania poured out rivers of oil, and superseded ships and wharves and fiery furnaces. My friend suffered a momentary shock; but his wisdom was supreme, mastering and papropriating the new knowledge.

The Son of man in his day is ever revealing new conceptions of the human and the divine; and, when Jesus says, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," he shows the amazing force and comprehension of his character. He recognized

the human-world fact of the conflict between past experience and new knowledge in the common mind — that all growth has a history, and truth creates the circumstances that aid its progress, as the atmosphere diffuses the beams of the sun. He saw in his pure vision that high truth was at a disadvantage in low minds, and that the baser the religion, the plainer the god. But the Son of man has no conflict in his mind or heart between old faith and new knowledge. To him evolution is only another name for history, and history is the method in which God is ever manifesting himself in the flesh. He knows the difference between science and religion, that religion is concerned with cause and science with method, and whatever science approves he adopts, always subjecting things to persons.

And here is the pinch to which the Son of man is put in his day — it is to teach men to recognize the divine order in the development of truth, to know that every doctrine that has gathered around it a body of believers has a germ of truth that can never perish, and that all true progress out of the past must carry with it into the future all the truth that the past has won. There is a timely and seasonal development of truth to different minds as they are prepared to receive it. As the discoveries and applications of science have come in a kind of providential order, according to the want and ability of the world to receive them, so Christianity has been unfolded according to the want and ability of human nature. Religion is the most flexible of all

forms of thought; and, of all religions, Christianity is most supple, and adapts itself with tender sympathy to the humble devotee who bows before the cross on which God is stretched in pitying love and grief, or croons and kisses the picture of the mother that bore him, to him who with true angelic vision worships the Father neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth. Consider the divisions of Christendom: the Greek Church, that quintessence of Orthodoxy; the Roman Catholic Church, the custodian of truth that is promulgated by the vicegerent of Christ, as he "looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world"; the Protestant sects that have their little or great followings, and their little opinions and contradictions — these are all Christians included in the divine hospitality of the mind of Christ. This is the liberality of Jesus and of his truth — the recognition that different geologic eras of the mind are represented in society, and that Silurians are on the earth in every age. To understand this, to see it and feel it, to discover it in imagination, and to sympathize with it in the heart, is the climax of the liberal mind, as it is the glory and perfection of the liberal God. This is the Son of man in his day, the child of the light, who speaks from the level of his mind, with all the sympathies of truth. It is the balance of judgment and insight, of conservatism and progress, of poetic faculty and plodding practicability. He says there are many things that cannot be received now, but he knows that the

spirit of truth will yet unlock the treasures of human nature. He knows no landings on the "stairs that lead through darkness up to God," and he no more thinks of coming to a stand from which there is no advance than the scientific man thinks to conclude his discoveries. The Son of man in his day never thinks himself a finality.

It is nigh two thousand years that our religion has been on earth, bearing the name of its Founder; and yet the summits of Christendom are just beginning to be touched with the day-spring from on high. Man has been on this earth for tens of thousands of years, yet he is just beginning to get hold of the powers of the world, and learning to write Nature with a capital N. The true account of this is that truth is revealed to man only as there is historic preparation for it in his own mind, and it suggests the eternities that are required to reduce principles to practice. Man creates nothing; he only finds something that was already aforetime. The facts and laws, as we call them, were ever what they are now. The pendulum — that presiding judge over the times and distances of the universe — was in the Garden of Eden as truly as it is to-day in the national observatory. Electricity was as active when Abraham led his flocks and pitched his tents in Arabia as it is now. But primeval time had no preparation for an eight-day clock, and the magnetic telegraph would have increased Job's confusion.

Nothing so impresses me as this human breadth of

sympathy and powerful space-piercing spiritual vision in Jesus which enabled him to speak to simple minds, yet to reveal truth far beyond them, and even then to tell them that this was not all, but that one should come, when they were prepared to receive him, with heavenly manners, who would lead them farther than he could, and help them to do greater things than he did. The mind of Jesus is the encouragement of humanity, and the encouragement of that Church Universal which carries forever the ideals of humanity in its breast. The progressive development of religion is concurrent with the life of the Son of man in his day.

We must confess that religious opinions, talents, insights, sensibilities, are very much matters of constitution and temperament. There are those to whom truly spiritual and ideal views are impossible. There is such a thing as truth that men cannot bear. Have we not seen a decent everyday character that has lost headway, and been thrown into the trough of the sea, by views that were quite true to a mind that could receive them? The fault is not in the truth, but in the man. We hear of such a thing as dangerous truth; but, if that means anything, it means dangerous as a spirited horse is dangerous to a timid and feeble rider. The great conservative instinct that makes men fear the influence of full-bloomed truth on the common mind is not all wrong, however it may be overdone by him who hugs the past. There is a great inertia in

human character that inspires a sympathetic mind with wise caution and careful fear, and the Son of man is no proselyter. Have we not, as moral and spiritual advisers, been compelled in all honesty to counsel some whose constitutional limitations were clearly marked to remain where they were? Have we not met those to whom to give what are to us most spiritual views of God and Christ and man were as useless as a sewing machine in the family Adam, or the Northwestern Railroad to Cæsar for the invasion of Gaul? This is not pearls before swine that I am speaking of now. It is that breadth of moral sympathy that was in Jesus, the poetic insight of the Son of man, and the practical, plodding facts of human life and experience. It is a simple principle of common sense, but which has not had much recognition in religion. It is what makes Christianity the common law of human nature, including within itself every possible condition.

This is the way of history, the way of progress, the way of evolution, the way of the Son of man, as I understand them. Happy are the men who have no conflict with their past, but go forward out of their past, carrying into the future the wisdom and truth they have won.

The lively discussions in different quarters concerning the creed and the creeds, the revision or remodeling of them, are little more than the comparison of errors, and lack the creative spirit of the Son of man. As the immoralities of our time are meannesses rather

than great crimes, so in religious thought and life there is much "See here!" and "See there!" instead of the lightning that lighteneth out of one part under heaven and shineth to the other part under heaven. I once knew a man who boasted that he could agree to any contract if he could have the writing of it. I can sign all the creeds in Christendom if I can have the interpretation of them. I feel very much toward them and their meaning as Augustine did about time. If you ask me, I do not know: if you do not ask me, I do know. Yet men of honor do not write agreements to be read between the lines. I could not do business or hire a man to saw a cord of wood or have a faithful maid in the kitchen on that plan. But I charge no man with dishonesty or prevarication in this matter. When I reflect on the variety of things that an honest man can do, from the United States Land Office to the New Theology, showing a versatility of resource with which no other talent bears comparison, I am careful how I charge men with religious dishonesty. I think that I do often see what I am bound to call intellectual and moral cowardice, and I am bound to confess that intellectual honesty is much more rare than moral honesty, owing to what seems to me some weakness of vision. Yet I am careful about calling men dishonest, though they do and say and believe that which I could not believe or say or do, to save my soul from hell. Hawthorne's ancestor was as honest whipping a witch on the road from Boston to Salem as the genial writer of

"The House of the Seven Gables." Honesty! Yes, let us have it. And let us believe in it, in ourselves, and in our fellow-men. Let us be more than honest: let us be honorable. And let us remember that honesty, to be worthy of its name, to be worthy of anything above a kind of pitiful respect, must carry a light that flames upon its path like that light of the Son of man in his day, that flashes from horizon to horizon, and no tallow dip. Progress, growth, spiritual life — all acclaim of faith and victory and glory — are in standing by the Son of man in his day, giving blessing and honor and power to the past for what it has done for the present and the future. Then the past is venerable and reverend, and through all its cruelties and ignorances there is a gleam of tender, loving care — the present is lovely, as the newborn of the race come forward to their great inheritance, and the future is crowned with hope and faith in the common destiny of man. Men weep over the venerable symbols that are passing away, as if truth were dead and buried, having no resurrection. Far be it from me to speak with levity of any illustrious sentiment in which the heart of man finds expression. I call men my brethren of whatever name; yet I do not intrude myself on them, or hang around them as one who would waste their time in getting acquainted, neither as one of their poor relations; yet I do not allow anybody to turn me out of the family. But when I read in the daily press how our brethren of the Presbyterians, in their Assembly, fell

upon each other's necks and wept over the fading glories of the creed, I should have been ashamed of my heart if I could not have been touched with that grief; yet we cannot always control the law of association, and I thought of the man in New Hampshire, ninety-three years old, who wept because his father and mother were dead and he was left an orphan. I am told by ancient records that my English ancestor was of respectable stock and named for a Christian hero who suffered at the stake for his religious opinions. Some of my ancestor's descendants have been respectable men, I am told — men of deep, religious convictions and bulky opinions. I am inclined to believe the tradition, and to be thankful for it. One of those men not far back held some public office when it was the fashion for men of authority, when on public duty, to wear the town-boots. I have a sincere respect for this memory and tradition of creed and boots; and, if I had them, boots and creed, I would send them, with a touch of pathos in my heart, to the World's Fair. Why should I not? I could not wear either, but the memory and the sentiment I would keep forever. In these times of old faith and new knowledge, times of disturbance, times of village surprises, and "See here!" and "See there!" how steady is the head and heart of the Son of man in his day! How high and how clear the light streams from east to west, from north to south! The Son of man, like the true poet that he is, shines and is content. The realms of reason are his;

there only can his beams penetrate. The human heart is his: there only can love find its native clime. Fear not: be not afraid.

It cannot be doubted that this new knowledge that is coming in so steadily has some advantages. And some think that it has the whip-hand of religion. But they mistake the theme. Physical science is concerned with things, and works with its own tools. It has the great advantage of the physical origin of language, and can say exactly what it means and all it means. It starts at full speed. But in all our language about man, his nature and being, the words do not contain all the truth. No lover can put half his heart into his letters, but he can make a chemical formula that will include every item of the analysis. Thus the attempt to reduce religion to terms of scientific exactness — that is, to express it in forms that will mean the same thing to all minds — must always fail. Physical science starts at full speed; but, in this race, it is the long, hot, dusty road and dog-trot that win. Physical science is the helper of religion; and the Son of man in his day will find no controversy, nor will he have any conflict concerning the relative rank of persons and things.

We are moving forward, it is said, from liberty to unity. What is the center of that unity? Has there a norm of organization been found? The dream of union and peace has been the vision of prophets and seers from age to age, and the vision is yet unfulfilled. Is there a church that offers honest and unselfish hospi-

tality large enough for all? There is none, unless it be the realization of Renan's "Apocalypse," when the Roman Catholic Church shall rouse herself to say: "My children, all here below is but symbol and dream. The only thing that is clear in this world is a tiny ray of azure light which gleams across the darkness, and seems as if it were the reflection of a benevolent will. Come to my bosom: forgetfulness is there. For those who want fetishes, I have fetishes. To whomsoever desires good works, I offer good works. For those who wish the intoxication of the heart, I have the milk of my breasts which intoxicates. For whoso want love and hate also, I abound in both; and, if any one desires irony, I pour it from a full cup. Come one and all: the time of dogmatic sadness is past. I have music and incense for your burials, flowers for your weddings, the joyous welcome of my bells for your newly born."

But the Roman Catholic Church will not say so; and, if she should, the Protestant world would not accept her invitation; for no one can settle that question but the Son of man in his day. Our duty, then, is plain — to stand by him until his light and truth shall fill the sphere.

THE END

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